

# Crisis And Renewal



Succession in Modern Sant Mat History

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by

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*Cover image: Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj at the bier of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj prior to  
cremation April 2, 1948.*

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## INTRODUCTION

This article is a detailed compilation of the historical incidents and arguments that shed some light on the succession issues of Sant Mat, while giving context to the controversial succession of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj (1858 – 1948). Of course each lineage and micro-lineage has a competing view that we can follow back hundreds of years in some cases. So I can only say that it is due to my prejudices and specific areas of interest that this study narrows in on the lineage of Soami ji to Baba Jaimal Singh, etc. With this in view, I believe that a positive consideration of principles and an historical overview of the Beas succession controversy not only illuminates the history of the lineage, but also offers the possibility of new insights into the nature of Sant Mat itself.

A lot of what we learn suggests the marked influence of personalities and politics on the course of the succession process. Yet, what I have also hoped to convey is the spiritual energy that runs like a river and surges like an ocean behind this surface play.

As an initiate of Sant Kirpal Singh (1894-1974) and a student of Sant Mat history since my teens, I have had a great interest in the controversies of succession that exist throughout Sant Mat history. Sant Darshan Singh, spiritual successor of Sant Kirpal Singh, acknowledged my research by spending a significant amount of time on several occasions answering my many questions. In 1988 I returned to Delhi after a seven year absence due to an invitation from Sant Darshan Singh. He used the occasion to express his perspective and knowledge of events pertaining to modern Sant Mat history. In the course of our talks Sant Darshan Singh explained that as far as events of modern history, he would only tell us what he had seen with his own eyes or heard directly from either Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj or Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj.

Sant Darshan Singh was well known for almost ceaseless activity and these discussions, which included two other visiting Westerners, spanned the better part of two entire nights and one afternoon. I recall how at the end of the second night, we departed the Master in full daylight, arriving back at the guest quarters of Kirpal Ashram while the other western visitors were lining up for breakfast. It was plain to us that something was being shared from the treasure house of his memories that he wished to pass on. It was these meetings that later formed the basis of this writing.

## PREFACE

“I am quite content, but I must accustom myself to a strange sensation in the hours that remain - I must realize that I have time for only one thing more. Can you imagine what that is?”

Conway was silent.

“It concerns you, my son.”

“You do me a great honor.”

“I have in mind to do much more than that.”

“Conway bowed slightly, but did not speak, and the High Lama, after waiting awhile, resumed:

“You know, perhaps, that the frequency of these talks is unusual here. But it is our tradition, if I may permit myself the paradox, that we are never slaves to tradition. We have no rigidities, no inexorable rules. We do as we think fit, guided a little by the example of the past, but still more by our present wisdom, and by our clairvoyance of the future. And thus it is that I am encouraged to do this final thing.”

Conway was still silent.

“I place in your hands, my son, the heritage and destiny of Shangri-La.”

From *Lost Horizon*

## SUCCESSION AND RENEWAL

In 1949 Kirpal Singh wrote a pamphlet in which he quoted Baba Sawan Singh on the subject of succession. Hazur makes one of the clearest statements in extant Sant Mat literature on the underlying dynamic that directs the process of spiritual succession:

“One day the Master spake thus: 'I am not tied to one or any particular place. The Saints who come commissioned from above tell the world of the true path and those who come seeking true knowledge are informed of the way to meet God. Worldly people in order to meet their worldly needs gather around them and make them as means of earning livelihood. When such wealth is accumulated in abundance, a number out of them turn out to be worshippers of Mammon whose lust can never be satisfied. When such circumstances are created, Saints withdraw from such a place. Such places then become the seat of mahants and gaddi-nashins. True Saints are not fastened to any religious sect or dress. They are free personalities. They are neither a party to one nor a foe to the other. They impart the true lesson as to how to reach God.’”<sup>1</sup>

This significant statement indicates to us how Masters in the Sant tradition regard the social institutions that develop around them. Sant Kirpal Singh is quoting Baba Sawan Singh as stating that the reality of the spiritually free is wholly different than that of the world, where ideas are ever moving into form and being captured within the structures thus created. There is no institution of the spirit, which is like a river ever changing its course according to season and circumstance.

Succession is an extremely important death/rebirth experience in the life of a spiritual lineage, offering opportunities for redefinition and innovation. With every succession period, much detritus that accumulates around the previous Master's mission is shaken off. Naturally, the disciples, concerned for their own security, are less willing to accept the opportunity that succession offers to the Masters in service of their timeless mission and rather more anxious to insure a smooth transition.

Could there be a reason that Sant Mat gurus are at times elusive or cryptic concerning an issue as critical as their succession? There have been times of unambiguous transference of authority as with Baba Sawan Singh's succession of Baba Jaimal Singh. At other times the transference has been deliberately ambiguous as with Baba Jaimal Singh's succession of Soami Ji, or Darshan Singh's succession of Sant Kirpal Singh. Perhaps there are circumstances where ambiguity creates opportunities that serve a larger purpose.

There is a dramatic and romantic appeal to the idea of the guruship as a flowing stream ever renewing itself under fresh circumstances. There is also strong historical evidence to support such a view. During the time of the Sikh gurus the gaddi shifted regularly with almost every succession period. There were also frequent controversies and a similar mixture of clear and vague successions. In the modern line we see that Tulsi Saheb travelled from the south to Hathras in the north. Soami Ji shifted the guruship from Hathras, the place of Tulsi Saheb, to his home base in Agra. Jaimal Singh settled far from Agra, in his native Punjab. Baba Sawan Singh built upon a small and young constituency, which gradually became a town with many associated properties and complex administrative issues. With the passing of Baba Sawan Singh, Kirpal Singh left this center and after a period of retreat in the jungles in the vicinity of Rishikesh, returned to Delhi to found Ruhani Satsang, stating that he did so on the orders of his Master. (Appendices A & B)

We can also try to understand the issue of ambiguity in the succession from an historic standpoint. Perhaps it has served as a means of maintaining the vitality of the guruship and

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<sup>1</sup> *Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh*. Kirpal Singh, Sawan Spiritual Trust, Delhi, 1949, p. 19

the Sant Mat teachings within the changing social and political circumstances of India over the long centuries. The regional nature of the guruship has meant enmeshment in the social and religious patterns of India, a culture that quickly turns her favored spiritual sons into full fledged religious institutions. A frequent change of venue has allowed the gurus of Sant Mat to avoid this tendency. In such a circumstance, how then does the preceding and later the successor guru regard the institutions that have evolved around the former, only to be abandoned by the latter? In our further discussion we will attempt to address this question.



**Guru Nanak**, the founder of a lineage of spiritual masters, who in some cases also became significant political and even military leaders. Guru Gobind Singh at the bottom, was the tenth guru, and the founder of the Khalsa, the foundation of the Sikh religion.

## SOAMI JI AND SUCCESSION

“Our Hazur was an adept in the theory and practice of Surat Shabd Yoga. In this modern age this divine science came to Tulsi Saheb and on to Soami ji...”

- Kirpal Singh from a discourse given in 1964 (Sat Sandesh April 1978)

Soami Ji (Shiv Dayal Singh 1818 – 1878) mentioned in his last hours that he had been practicing the inner science since the age of six.<sup>2</sup> A little subtraction tells us that Soami Ji would have practiced Surat Shabd Yoga since 1824, eighteen years before the death of Tulsi Saheb of Hathras. Soami Ji's parents were disciples of Tulsi Saheb and his early life was closely linked to this teacher of Surat Shabd Yoga and to his sangat. Soami Ji referred very frequently to Tulsi Saheb in his talks and discourses and their recorded teaching are essentially indistinguishable. It is said that Tulsi did not pass away before Munshi Ji (as Tulsi referred to Soami Ji) had come from Agra to receive a last glance from the great Saint.<sup>3</sup> Soami Ji referred to God as Satguru Saheb or Soami Saheb, terms used to address Tulsi Saheb. In this light it is difficult to understand a statement such as that by Mark Juergensmeyer, author of a major academic work on the Radhasoami tradition, when he says, “there is no indication that Tulsi Saheb had actually initiated Soami Ji.”<sup>4</sup>



The pertinent question is not whether Soami Ji was initiated by Tulsi Saheb, which though inferential, is still based on compelling evidence, but why this is not explicitly stated in his recorded words, and why it was actively disavowed by Rai Saligram. Due to Saligram's

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<sup>2</sup> Biography of Soami ji Maharaj . Lala Pratap Singh Seth (Chachaji Saheb), Radhasoami Satsang, Soami Bagh, Agra, 1968, p.193. (Originally written, in Hindi, in 1902)

<sup>3</sup> See *Tulsi Saheb: Saint of Hathras*. RS Satsang Beas, 1978, p. 8.

An interesting version of this story as told by Baba Sawan Singh himself is also found in Rai Saheb Munshi Ram's diaries:

“June 1946 - During the morning walk Huzur said, “The grandmother and the mother of Swami Ji Maharaj were both devotees of Tulsi Sahib. I have seen a lady Satsangi of about ninety or a hundred years old who used to say that Tulsi Sahib often came to Huzur Swami Ji Maharaj's house in Panni Lane in Agra. When the last moments of Tulsi Sahib arrived He called for Swami Ji Maharaj, whom He used to call Munshi Ji (a man of letters).

“When this message reached Swami Ji, he left immediately, barefooted. such was His love for the Satguru! When he arrived at Hathras, which is about fourteen miles from Agra, Tulsi Sahib, in great ecstasy and deep meditation, had closed His eyes. People said to Him, ‘Huzur, Munshi Ji arrived.’ At this, He opened His eyes, fixed them intently on Swami Ji Maharaj, and then left this world.” *With The Three Masters* . Rai Sahib Munshi Ram. RS Satsang Beas. 1967. pp. 179 - 180. What occurred when Tulsi Saheb fixed his gaze on Soami Ji, may well have been the transference of spiritual empowerment through the eyes often referred to by Kirpal Singh.

<sup>4</sup> *The Sants*. The Radhasoami Revival, p. 351, Mark Juergensmeyer. He also notes that “The teachings of Tulsi Sahib are remarkably similar to those of Shiv Dayal.” Why is this so remarkable?



teaching, the belief that Soami Ji had no guru became a basic article of faith with the Agra Radhasoami branches and may have led to the suppression of any contrary evidence.

Baba Jaimal Singh in a discussion of a planned publication of *Sar Bachan* tells Baba Sawan Singh that it should not be written in the preface that Soami Ji had no Guru.<sup>5</sup> Baba Sawan Singh himself did acknowledge the initiatic connection between Tulsi Saheb and Soami Ji, but this topic was avoided in Beas literature, as it is to this day. This was probably due, in large part, to the nature of the relationships between Beas and the Agra satsangs. Baba Sawan Singh maintained cordial relations with Babuji Maharaj, then guru at SoamiBagh, as well as with the Dayalbagh satsang with whom an agreement had been signed that established common ground. The agreement made in 1932 with the Dayalbagh Radhasoami group states:

“...Dayalbagh and Beas Satsangis both accept Param Purush Puran Dhani Soamiji Maharaj as the Incarnation of Radhasoami Dayal, and the Radhasoami Nam as the Nij Nam (True Name) of the Supreme Father, and the secret of this Nij Nam is explained at the time of initiation in both Satsangs.”

This verbiage allows plenty of room for each side to make interpretations in accord with their own doctrinal position. For example, Beas accepted the term Radhasoami, but regarded it as synonymous with Anaami, the infinite unmanifest realm, rather than a previously unrevealed spiritual realm beyond as was taught at Agra. Therefore, for Beas, regarding Soami Ji as the incarnation of Anaami /Radhasoami did not necessarily confer a special status on his revelation over and above all other past saints (who are also recognized as having the same status); the specific implication of the Agra interpretation. Also, the agreement did not include stating that Soami Ji had no guru, a point of contention.

Kirpal Singh, on the other hand, free of the constraints felt by the relationships between these various institutions, was unambiguous in his assertion that Soami Ji did in fact have a Guru and it was Tulsi Saheb. Kirpal Singh in his biography of Baba Jaimal Singh develops a history of Soami Ji’s predecessors that links the present line of Masters to the earlier line of Sikh Gurus through a member of Tulsi Saheb’s family, thence on to Tulsi Saheb. In doing so he was indicating that, in his view, Soami Ji was a successor to the great Masters of the past, and not a unique incarnation, as claimed at Agra.

On the day of Soami Ji’s passing he made a number of statements regarding arrangements for the future care of the Agra sangat that are very relevant to our overall themes:

1) In three places he specifically elevates his wife’s spiritual stature. To all the assembled disciples including Saligram he says, “You should, henceforth, respect Radhaji as you have respected me.” When he is asked by a female disciple “Whom have you appointed to look after and guide us?” Soami Ji replies, “Radhaji for ladies and Sanmukh Das for Sadhus.” Again speaking to the female devotees he says, “They should all worship Radhaji and have Her Darshan.”<sup>6</sup> A little earlier he specified Sanmukh Das’s role as that of a manager and administrator for the Sadhus.

2) He does not name Rai Saligram as his spiritual successor, yet he does direct people to Rai Saligram to have questions answered on spiritual matters. This is notable given that

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<sup>5</sup> *Spiritual Gems*. RS Satsang Beas, Punjab, India, first edition, no date, Page 77, Letter 98, dated 21st. November 1902. In letter 103 with reference to the preface to *Sar Bachan*, Baba Jaimal Singh writes, “Please do not write therein that Swami Ji had no Guru.”

<sup>6</sup> *Biography of Soamiji Maharaj*. Ibid. pp. 191-200

some of the answers are going to differ markedly from those that Soami Ji himself might have given.

3) While drawing a clear line between his path (“Sat Naam and Anaami”) and that of his disciple Rai Saligram (“Radhasoami faith”) he yet tolerates its continuation. This is of very great importance as it displays an attitude of tolerance and equanimity towards peculiar developments within his satsang.

Though certain individuals were told by Soami Ji that Baba Jaimal Singh would carry on the work in the Punjab, there is no documented evidence, such as a will, that he was named as Soami Ji’s Gurumukh successor. Baba Jaimal Singh’s last hours in the company of Soami Ji occurred many months before his Guru’s passing in 1878. Baba Jaimal Singh’s duties in the military carried him far from Agra and for long periods. His spiritual stature and close relationship with Soami Ji may not have been general knowledge. He was recognized as one of the legitimate heirs of Soami Ji, by Radha Ji, Chacha Pratap Singh Ji (Soami Ji’s wife and younger brother respectively), Rai Saligram, as well as Baba Gharib Das, a disciple of Tulsi Sahab. Baba Jaimal Singh returned to Agra after his retirement in 1889 and his reunion with these advanced disciples of Soami Ji was a time of rejoicing.<sup>7</sup>

The peculiarity of these facts cannot be missed. Baba Jaimal Singh’s satsang, though far from Agra, grew to be the most significant of Soami Ji’s succession lines. Not one of the other Gurus after Soami Ji appointed a successor and the eventual succession of Rai Saligram had nothing to do with any formal designation or commission on his part.

It becomes clear that the forces and principles that govern succession in Sant Mat are uncommon and defy the usual logic of succession in religion, politics, monarchies, etc. Soami Ji had tolerance for Rai Saligram even though he had a heterodox interpretation of Soami Ji’s teaching in his lifetime. Clearly, by the time of Soami Ji’s death, Rai Saligram was already advancing well along toward a distinctive teaching. Although Rai Saligram did not begin functioning as a guru for some years after the death of Soami Ji, his personal influence must have been very great, for his satsang made rapid growth, and his own theological interpretations quickly superceded those of his predecessor at Agra.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See “The Torch Bearer” in *A Great Saint Baba Jaimal Singh*. Ruhani Satsang, Sawan Ashram, Delhi, India, 1960.

<sup>8</sup> It is worthwhile to note Baba Jaimal Singh’s view of Rai Saligram’s teachings as expressed in several of his letters.

In this paragraph, Baba Jaimal Singh is discussing the formation of the Central Administrative Council that was being formed at Agra, under the authority of Pandit Brahm Shankar Misra, the eventual successor of Rai Saligram at Agra.

“The fact is that the form of updes (spiritual instructions) adopted (by them) is quite different from that of Soami Ji, and so is the method of sitting in Bhajan. The whole process as was introduced by Soami Ji has been lost sight of by them. As they do not even know the primary principle, there can be no agreement between us. So we shall adopt the outer form of Radhasoami greetings.”

Baba Jaimal Singh is drawing an absolute line between Sant Mat as taught by himself and that being taught at Agra by Pandit Brahm Shankar Misra, the self-appointed eventual successor of Rai Saligram. Baba Ji advocates maintaining good relations (“the outer form of Radhasoami greetings”), but he is not advocating any serious accommodation.

“When you send your reply to Chacha Ji, inform him that this is a matter for Baba Jaimal Singh to decide. I shall then write to him to clarify three things, and if it is done we shall give them a list of the satsangis. The three points are: 1) that the method of initiation should be as given by Soami Ji Maharaj himself and so also the process of spiritual exercises, because those adopted by Rai Saligram are entirely wrong, being different from the original.”

When Soami Ji allows for Saligram's Radhasoami Mat, it indicates a tolerance for those who create divisions and bring varied interpretations into being. The Satgurus approach to existing social structures and those who lead and inhabit them does not appear to be a divisive one, rather it is characterized by toleration to the web that nature spins unceasingly. Their own spiritual work unfolds down through time and in various incarnations as a kind of dance with the ever changing conditions of the world, seeking opportunities for the fullest extension of their message within existing circumstances.

Soami Ji's own path of Sat Naam and Anaami, flourished at Beas. Baba Jaimal Singh's freedom from the constraints of Agra proved a great advantage in elucidating his own development of Soami Ji's teaching.

In his translation of Soami Ji's Sar Bachan (Prose) Jaimal Singh took the step of correcting Paragraph 250 of the Agra edition. Where the Agra edition, first published several years after the death of Soami Ji, said that one must contemplate the successor in order to make progress on the path, Baba Ji changed this to read that the disciple should contemplate his own guru even after his departure from this world.



**Soamiji Maharaj** with some of the male members of His family. Partap Singh (Chacha Ji), his youngest brother, is sitting on the carpet to his left. Younger brother Rai Brindaban, who founded his own sect, is seated on the bench to Soami ji's right. Rai Saligram behind with fan. The others are Chacha Ji's three sons. Seth Sudarshan Singh, who wrote devotional letters to Baba Sawan Singh, is also seated on the floor.

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Here, like Soamiji before him, Baba Jaimal Singh is again making a firm distinction between the teachings he was given by Soamiji and those developed by Rai Saligram.

Sat Sandesh April 1978, Translation of a letter of Baba Jaimal Singh to Baba Sawan Singh dated June 19,1903.

## THE SUCCESSION OF BABA SAWAN SINGH JI MAHARAJ



“With the dawn of Chet, my heart grows sad,  
It is so since I lost my Beloved;  
I prayed and prayed, but to no effect,  
And all my efforts were in vain;  
The Beautiful One did not turn back but went away,  
He did not listen to all my entreaties and persuasions,  
Woe betide the day I loved You, O Beloved,  
The day when our eyes met.”

-The first eclogue of a Punjabi poem written by Kirpal Singh in 1927, following a vision of the passing of Baba Sawan Singh.<sup>9</sup>

When looking at the larger historical context of a given succession period we discover the impact of various personalities close to the guru. These are persons who have high positions

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted from *Rubani Newsletter*, July-August 1976, p. 15.

On this incident Kirpal Singh tells us, “In 1927 I had a vision, I saw the exact month and day Master would be leaving us - over twenty-one years before he really left the physical body. Afterward, I never had a moment of complete joy in his lifetime because I always had that sting from the thorn of separation which was awaiting me. I was constantly dreading his leaving. So I always prayed, Master, let me go before you. He always said, No, it cannot be done. You are to continue. You have to work. I thought, Why, why do I have to? but orders cannot be questioned.” - *Portrait of Perfection*, p. 40

in the administration or otherwise work closely with the Master. During the succession crisis some may be concerned with their position in any future administration, some perhaps have designs on the guruship itself, others are concerned with a stable transference, still others with the future disposition of valuable properties, etc. The diversity of agendas and the organizational influence of various individuals may play an important role in how the guru chooses to make his succession known, though it would not affect who he chooses.

The two largest Radhasoami branches in the world today are Radhasoami Satsang Beas, presently under the leadership of Maharaj Gurinder Singh Ji, and Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission under Sant Rajinder Singh Ji. Both teach identical methods of meditation, trace their lineages to Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, and have achieved a level of international growth far exceeding any of the Agra branches. This fact alone makes their common origins an interesting matter for review. A discussion of the events preceding and following Baba Sawan Singh's passing illuminates many issues of succession as well advancing our theory of its uncommon, unpredictable nature.

## Sources

Researching information about the Beas succession is a special problem in itself. It is a story that begins long before 1948. Kirpal Singh's references to his twenty-four year discipleship are scattered among his writings and while plentiful, are extremely modest for the time involved. There are a number of incidents which Kirpal Singh mentions repeatedly to make certain points regarding the proper attitude of the disciple. However, it has become clear through the writings and the testimony of witnesses, that Kirpal Singh was only ever offering glimpses.

A reading of the sum total of the accounts that have become available regarding the relationship of Baba Sawan Singh and Kirpal Singh is an extremely moving contemporary testament to the nature of the guru/disciple relationship. Given the lack of a written will regarding Kirpal Singh's succession, it is only by reference to a number of these accounts that a clearer picture of Kirpal Singh's discipleship and the deeper foundations of his succession claim can be understood. It is for this reason that I have provided several accounts from both Kirpal Singh and others (see also Appendix C). Without this raw material, the reader is left short-handed.

In the case of Jagat Singh and Charan Singh analogous material is even sketchier. The accounts of Jagat Singh's discipleship reveal a disciplined, rather austere man, with great devotion to his spiritual practice and his guru. There are stories of his life, but very few relative to the length of his discipleship (he was initiated in 1910, indeed most of Hazur's administration were early initiates). His record of service at Dera and the positions he was given by Hazur indicate Hazur's trust and willingness to invest him with significant responsibilities. Charan Singh's background and the circumstances of his succession will be reviewed later.

The Beas group went to some lengths to challenge Kirpal Singh's succession at different times throughout his ministry. It could be argued, as we shall soon see, that these attempts to discredit Kirpal Singh, were nothing more than the continuation of a process that began at least a decade before the passing of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh. Besides blunt letters denying the veracity of Kirpal Singh's succession claims written by Charan Singh to disciples and published in a collection of his letters and talks, there have been several references of importance in Urdu language publications. However, the Beas satsang is apparently uncomfortable about publishing hard-edged political rhetoric in the English language as references are sketchy.

Earlier editions of *Firdaus-i-Barin*, by Daryai Lal Kapur, in Urdu, contained a great deal of polemic against Kirpal Singh, of which we get only the merest whiff in the English

translation titled Heaven on Earth. The severity of the Urdu text led to the private publication of a small English language booklet Truth Triumphant, as a response by several Baba Sawan Singh initiates associated with Kirpal Singh. There are details in this small booklet that are found nowhere else in the English language, but these are only produced in a sketchy form.

Pita Poot by H.C. Chadda and originally published by Ruhani Satsang contains the greatest quantity of information on the discipleship of Sant Kirpal Singh and the last months of the life of Baba Sawan Singh, giving valuable glimpses of Kirpal Singh during this period. The section pertaining to the last days of Hazur is quite simply the most thorough record available in any language, albeit from the Kirpal Singh group.

Rai Munshi Ram's Urdu diary account of Hazur's last days has interesting references to Kirpal Singh that are largely missing from the English translation. Indeed, throughout Munshi Ram's book there are various references to Kirpal Singh as well as to his son and eventual successor, Darshan Singh, which never made it to the English translation titled With The Three Masters.

## The Overview

In brief, the Beas view is that the will of Baba Sawan Singh dated March 20, 1948, clearly and unmistakably expresses Baba Sawan Singh's wishes regarding succession. This is regarded as a natural progression from previous documents drawn up by Baba Sawan Singh in which he had named Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh, vice-president in charge of the administration of the Dera with Baba Sawan Singh as president. Daryai Lal Kapur, the chief Beas polemicist of this period, states that with the administrative plan documented in September 1947 "it became evident to many of us that Maharaj Ji had decided to appoint Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh as his successor." He also asserts, "Many advanced satsangis had known much earlier that Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh would be entrusted with the duty of satsang and initiation."<sup>10</sup> However, no accounts are offered to substantiate this claim.

Although S.B. Jagat Singh was accepted as Baba Sawan Singh's successor at Beas, he outlived his guru by only two and a half years. The tacit assumption, implicit in several stories, is that Charan Singh was the ultimate successor of Baba Sawan Singh, S.B. Jagat Singh serving as a kind of bridge, while young Charan Singh presumably continued to mature. Though there is no objective evidence for this line of reasoning, when Baba Sawan Singh said that his successor would come with "ten fold powers and grace," as reported by Kapur,<sup>11</sup> one could hardly imagine that this referred to S.B. Jagat Singh, who only briefly presided over a fragmented and ailing administrative structure and remained in the long shadow of his predecessor.

The main competing view is that Kirpal Singh was the sole spiritual successor of Baba Sawan Singh, having been groomed over the entire period of his discipleship, and verbally designated six months prior to Baba Sawan Singh's passing, shortly after the will was written regarding Dera administration in late September 1947. Furthermore, a number of factors led Baba Sawan Singh to order Kirpal Singh to leave Dera Beas after his passing.

## Early Controversy

During the late fifties and early sixties, Kirpal Singh found a lack of harmony between some members of the satsang regarding the mundane work of the organization. He addressed these divisions in several circular letters and in numerous talks and meetings on his

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 207.

<sup>11</sup> *Call of the Great Master*. Daryai Lal Kapur, RS Satsang Beas, 1972, p. 134.

1963-64 tour.<sup>12</sup> He would use the following story of controversy directed against him during his discipleship to illustrate the attitude of mind to be carried when faced with criticism and controversy.

“When we make parties, one against the other, what do we do? We tell this side one thing and that side something else. You are deceiving your own selves, and the God in you sees you.

“I may mention to you today one incident. There are always controversies going on. In my own life, Master once ordered me during his lifetime to initiate about 250 people in the monthly gathering.<sup>13</sup> Those who were after the Mastership became worried: 'What is going to happen? Everything is gone from our hands.' They made parties and spread a great deal of propaganda against me, in writing, through letters and this and that thing. I was true to my own Self. The Master had ordered me to do it; and to give talks at satsang places, attend the poor, the sick, the needy, everyone. Even when I left the office, I used to be attending the sick until eight, nine or ten o'clock at night, and sometimes even later than that.

“The Master had ordered me to do it; and letters about me, written by the parties concerned, began to pour in, in all languages, from different towns. They were all about the same subject: 'He's such a man; he's such a man; he's such a man.' And Master also knew about the letters. There were heaps of letters from all around.

“My Master had always asked me, when I went to see him, 'Well, come on, please, and give a talk.' And what did I do? He was sitting there, and he made me sit near him, like a son or a student. I would speak my heart to him--I would open my heart to him in a heart-to-heart talk--and the people enjoyed.

“But they had arranged it so that for eight months regularly I was not permitted to go near the Master, not even to talk to him. So much propaganda was being carried on! But I would just look at his eyes, and that was sufficient for me; because eyes speak more than words.

“My Master used to go to the hills. My elder brother went there (I did not even tell this secret to my brother. Why complain of the Master and his disciples to someone else?), and I simply asked him, 'When you find yourself all alone with the Master, simply ask him if there are any drawbacks or if there is anything I've done wrong...I may have erred knowingly or unknowingly. Just talk with the Master.'

“When my brother came back, I asked him, 'Did you ask the Master about it?' And he said, 'Yes.' The Master said, 'I know he has done nothing wrong, either knowingly or unknowingly; but strangely enough, so much water passed over his head, but he never came to me to tell me about it.'

“So naturally, when Master returned--I never asked any time from my Master--I said, 'I want a few minutes with you.'

“Oh, yes, you're welcome.'

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<sup>12</sup> See Circular 17 written in 1961: “...I cannot help observing the growth of tendencies which must be a matter of concern for all of us. In spite of repeated exhortations and persuasions, I find growing and springing up amidst us the weeds of discord and disharmony. Competition seems to have taken the place of cooperation, rivalry that of love, and distrust that of trust and good faith...Unless checked they lead ultimately to serious rifts and divisions. The original goal is completely forgotten in the heat of controversy and debate and the purpose we set out to achieve lies wholly neglected...”(*Sat Sandesh*, Aug. 1970, p. 18)

<sup>13</sup> This was not the first or last time that Baba Sawan Singh had asked Kirpal Singh to give the initiation instruction in his stead. According to the account of Iqbal Kaur in *The Ocean of Grace Divine*, Kirpal Singh was asked by Hazur to initiate a group of ten seekers at Lahore in 1936. She claims to have been a witness to this event. Apparently, because it occurred at Lahore, the action did not receive the wide notice or strong reaction of the later event described in this selection.

“When the day had passed and it was about nine or ten in the night, he sent for me and said, ‘Close the doors.’

“I was with him, sitting by him. I told him, ‘I did not come to you because I know that you are in me and seeing my every action--watching my every action and also the trend of my life: you know where I am going. That is why I never came to you.’

“He was all wrath. He said, ‘Those people have created so much hell.’

“I said, ‘Well, I have not come for that.’

“What did he say the next day? I used to always sit at the back<sup>14</sup>, just watching. He sat on the throne--the pulpit--and said, ‘Well, Kirpal Singh, come on, give your talk!’

“And those around him who were making parties said, ‘No, Master, we won't like to hear him: we would like to hear from you directly.’

“He said, ‘No, he will talk.’ They insisted very much. And still he ordered me: ‘You come here and talk to them.’

“Strangely enough, the tables were turned in one night.”  
(Talk given Nov.11, 1963, Louisville, Ky.)

Beyond its immediate utility to Kirpal Singh in making certain points to his sangat on controversy within the group, this remarkable historical anecdote indicates that within the inner circle of Baba Sawan Singh's disciples there was aggressive jealousy, intrigue, and a serious concern over who would inherit the guruship, and presumably control over the millions of rupees worth of properties that went with it.

In a talk given to a small group on July 21, 1974, one month before his passing, Kirpal Singh alluded to another incident:

“In the time of my Master, many people hankered after the Mastership after Him. One even made Him sign a paper reading, ‘This is the follower.’ They prepared the whole thing. He was an advocate...he died. There are so many others too. Master always used to refer people to me. They wondered, ‘How, how can that be?’ So one day He called me and said, ‘I have just issued all my duties except Initiation. I vouchsafe this to you.’ No one son would like his father to be suffering. I shed tears. This is selection - no voting...” (Sat Sandesh Dec. 1975)

The incident alluded to probably occurred during the severe illness of Hazur while at Dalhousie, September 2-19, 1943. Rai Munshi Ram writes, “During this period the Master was seriously ill at Dalhousie. By the eighteenth He was feeling much better.”<sup>15</sup>

Kapur writes, “Our happiness was suddenly marred after a fortnight by the Great Master falling seriously ill--in fact very dangerously ill. The doctors would only whisper among themselves and answered all our queries with, ‘Don't worry everything will be all right.’ This meant to us that everything was not all right...On the tenth day His condition

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<sup>14</sup> Radha Krishna Khanna, LL.B., writes about Kirpal Singh, “When He went to Beas, He made it a point to sit in the last row at Satsang, while I, as an unregenerate soul...used to think, ‘Well, I've come from more than two hundred miles to see Hazur, and attend the Satsang, why shouldn't I avail myself of the best place so that I can hear every word?’ And I used to sit in the first or second row. Actually, whenever I sat behind the first row, the Master used to beckon me to come and sit in front. Well, once I met Maharaj Kirpal Singh; we had been talking to each other for some time and when we went to the place where the Great Master was holding Satsang, I thought I might also sit with Him. And there I found that I had a better darshan of the Master in the last row where Kirpal Singh was sitting, and I also heard more of the Satsang! Now I was astonished...” (Glimpses of a Perfect Being, from *The Ocean of Grace Divine*. Delhi, 1976)

<sup>15</sup> *With the Three Great Masters*. Munshi Ram, R.S. Beas, 1974, p. 129.



grew very serious. The doctors lost all hope. This state lasted for three days and even after that we spent many sleepless nights and days.”<sup>16</sup>

Apparently, at least one individual, mindful that the end might well be nigh, took the opportunity to see to the matter of succession.

## Gurmat Sidhant

In 1938 Beas published Gurmat Sidhant (The Teachings of the Masters). This enormous book printed in two volumes is a detailed review of all aspects of the philosophy of Sant Mat, with thousands of citations from the spiritual literature of the east. There is a relationship between the 1938 incident in which Kirpal Singh was kept away from Hazur Baba Sawan Singh for eight months and the writing of the volume Gurmat Sidhant, as described by Kirpal Singh in the following two talks:

“I remember Hazur once sent me an order. Sometimes it happens that if an individual is heading straight for his target, others create propaganda against him. Due to this type of propaganda Hazur ordered I should attend only Satsang at Ravi Road Lahore, and should not visit anyone. I said, ‘All right, whatever are His orders.’ I got a lot of rest during those days -- something like a servant who normally cleans twenty rooms being told to clean only one and leave the rest. I had more spare time, so I wrote the book Gurmat Sidhant, a big book of over 2000 pages. I strictly curbed all visiting; in fact, a relative's son died and I did not attend them at their house, but went only to the cremation.”<sup>17</sup>

“There was another case of a Satsangi who was dying. He sent a message for me to go to him, for the Guru's sake, before he died. I had a strong desire to go, and the pain of sympathy was so great that I cried, but I had to send the message that I sincerely wished that he have full protection, and all my good wishes were with him, but that I was helpless, for I could not disobey the Master's orders. That Satsangi died. When Hazur came to Lahore, the man's widow complained that her husband died in torment because of his desire to see me, and told the Master of my refusal to visit him. Hazur turned to me and said, ‘Kirpal Singh, in this type of condition you should go.’ From then on, I would only attend when people who were dying summoned me to their sickbed. It became very difficult, but his orders were to go only wherever the person was dying.”<sup>18</sup>

A few other references bring out other aspects of this period:

“So during this time, under explicit directions from the Master, I wrote the book Gurmat Sidhant, which is in two volumes of over two thousand pages. It was written through my hands, I would say, not by me, but by the Master within me. I used to begin writing at about eight or nine at night. One day a writer was there watching me. About midnight he said, ‘You are writing so fast, but you are not copying anything. How do you write?’ I said, ‘Somebody is dictating to me; I cannot write as fast as it is dictated.’ If you become receptive to the Master, you will become what he is.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Call of the Great Master*. Daryai Lal Kapur, R.S. Beas, 1972, pp. 130-131.

<sup>17</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. 1973, pp. 28-29

<sup>18</sup> *Portrait of Perfection*. Sawan Kirpal Publications, Bowling Green, Virginia, USA 1981, p. 35

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35 Kirpal Singh's periodic references to his authorship of *Gurmat Sidhant* arose in the time of his own ministry and may have been initially due to the fact that Beas claimed copyright ownership and would not allow him to publish it in Punjabi. The majority of Kirpal Singh's references to his authorship are found in transcriptions of recorded talks to small groups of disciples. The majority of these were published in *Sat Sandesh* after his passing in 1974, and in the posthumous volume, *Heart to Heart Talks*. Generally, his references were in the larger context of a story from that time.

On another occasion, Kirpal Singh reported:

“When I read out that part of Gurmat Sidhant on physical separation to him, Hazur said, ‘That’s all right, Kirpal Singh; read it again!’ I had just quoted two or three sentences. Then again I read it to him. He said, ‘Will you read it once more?’ Again I read it.”<sup>20</sup>

Beas references to a 1919 version of Gurmat Sidhant as an attempt to undermine Kirpal Singh's claim to authorship is an instance of malicious illogic. How does one compare a pamphlet written in 1919 and the enormous Gurmat Sidhant? It could hardly have served as more than an outline of the later text.

Kirpal Singh states that the entire work was personally approved by Hazur. Kirpal Singh states, “He gave explicit directions on writing the Gurmat Sidhant, which he graciously consented to publish under his own name.”<sup>21</sup>

Darshan Singh tells us:

“When I was in my teens and he was compiling the Gurmat Sidhant, my father would give me some research work to do; I would have to read through so many relevant books.....Sometimes I would finish very late at night - one o'clock was quite a general thing. But whatever time I would go to bed I would always find that the Beloved Master was still writing; and then when I got up for my meditations at five o'clock in the morning, I would find Him in meditation.”

In his autobiography, Darshan Singh describes his role in the production of Gurmat Sidhant:

“My study of Persian and Urdu enabled me to help my father in his compilation of Gurmat Sidhant. Every night around twelve or one in the morning, my father would come into my room and give me certain subjects on which to collect quotations from various sources. Every second or third day, he would give me a new subject. Some of these were: love, separation from God, Word or Naam, simran, remembrance of God, dying while living, and the like. He would ask me to collect quotations on these subjects from the mystics, from Persian and Urdu poets, and from the Bible.”<sup>22</sup>

In the face of a number of accounts by witnesses to his writing, the thorough detail of Kirpal Singh's own discussion of this period, and the complete lack of any credible competing testimony, there is really no foundation for the several attempts to contradict Kirpal Singh's assertion of authorship. Furthermore, how a book of this magnitude could have been directly authored by Baba Sawan Singh at the height of his ministry has yet to be explained. It should also be noted that the introductory articles which precede each volume of Gurmat Sidhant are titled My Submission, also with authorship attributed to Baba Sawan Singh. This choice of title itself begs the question. In my discussion with Darshan Singh in 1988, he stated emphatically that Kirpal Singh had also written these introductory sketches.

In the preface to the English volume of My Submission the Beas secretary writes:

“...it will be no exaggeration to call (Gurmat Sidhant), the Bible or be-all and end-all of all literature dealing with matters spiritual...”

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 40

<sup>35</sup> *Portrait of Perfection*. Ibid. p. 31. The first four successors of Guru Nanak referred to themselves as “Nanak” in their very extensive poetic compositions as found in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, never once differentiating themselves by name. Each poem is given a marking that allows for proper attribution of the author.

<sup>22</sup> *Love Has Only A Beginning - Autobiography of Darshan Singh*. SK Publications, Delhi, 1996, p. 43

Despite such high regard for the original, it has been substantially tampered with in the English translation issued by Beas, after Hazur past away. The order of sections has been shifted, some text and many quotes have been eliminated. Comparing Gurmat Sidhant to scripture and then altering the text is a surprising contradiction. One can only speculate if translators of the Holy Bible or copyists of the Guru Granth Sahib had taken a similar hand to their work; chopping and changing to suit an editorial agenda.

## **The Last Months of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh**

Let us now review some of the events of the last months of the life of Hazur Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh Ji, derived primarily from Kirpal Singh's accounts as well as Pita Poot, in more or less chronological order. Due to the lack of an authorized translation of Pita Poot I have had chapter six (on Baba Sawan Singh's passing), translated directly in my presence. I will not quote verbatim from this rough translation, however, I will adhere as closely as possible to the text as I understood it. Where I did not feel the translation was accurate or precise enough, I have omitted the story or information. Where I have found more precise English language accounts I have utilized these. Where Pita Poot adds specific details, I have mentioned this as the source. Where other contrasting or supporting Beas references exist I will also draw on these as well. The purpose is to bring in to view the flow of events as well as the political tensions that were present.

In a talk given in September of 1955, during his first tour of America, Kirpal Singh described a significant conversation with Hazur during the summer of 1947:

“I used to pray to my Master, you see, sometimes when we were all alone, because I dreaded that thing all the while. I asked Him this many times: ‘Well Master, I pray to you for one gift.’ He said, ‘What?’ ‘Send me before you go.’ He always answered back, ‘No, it cannot be done. You have to work. It can't be done.’ He never refused me anything except this -- excuse me -- he did agree, you see, for eight months; because in August 1947, He was just ready to go. He made all the arrangements, all the accounts were settled, the balance sheet was prepared. He sent for me. I was sitting all alone with Him. He said, ‘Well, look here, you have to pay such and such a man so much, after I go.’ He was giving me instructions, some details on this and that thing. Then He told me, ‘Well, the balance sheet of the accounts are being prepared. That will be shown to you on the next morning.’

“Any blind man could see what he was going to say after that. I simply just spread my heart before Him. I told Him with tears in my eyes, I said, ‘Master, I never asked anything from You during my whole life.’ (That did not mean that what I wanted was not given to me. Those things were given unasked for.) ‘But today I ask You for one gift, one favor.’ ‘Well, tell me what you want.’ ‘Only that You remain with us’ He kept quiet, then said, ‘All right.’ He was very sick; He just laid down and I went away. I returned to Him after about four hours. He called me, ‘Well, look here, what you asked of me, what you want, that will be done for some time.’ So that was done.<sup>23</sup>

According to Pita Poot, soon after the creation of three committees for the administration of Dera in late September 1947, Baba Sawan Singh made an announcement in satsang saying that he was old and couldn't look after all the work, explaining that this was why the committees were created. At this time he said that if anyone had to ask about spiritual questions, he should go to Sardar Kirpal Singh, who would work according to his orders. One prominent satsangi asked if all the work of the Dera, including its spiritual activities had been entrusted to S.B. Jagat Singh (who had been made overall vice-president).

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<sup>23</sup> *Rubani Newsletter*. March-April, 1976, p. 6

According to Pita Poot Baba Sawan Singh answered that Jagat Singh's position would be to look after the management of the Dera.

After settling various family affairs, including a property will, of which Kirpal Singh was a signatory, Hazur proceeded to Amritsar near the end of September. Prior to his departure Kirpal Singh asked permission to accompany Hazur to Amritsar. Baba Sawan Singh, however, asked him to stay on at Dera and look after the Muslims and others seeking the protection of the facility during the partition crisis. Hazur also ordered the other administrators to stay at Dera at this time.

In fact, the very evening of Baba Sawan Singh's departure, an event occurred in which Kirpal Singh played an important role in preventing an Akali attack on a group of Muslims leaving the Dera.

At Amritsar on Saturday October 4, 1947, Baba Sawan Singh was given a transfusion with blood of the wrong type. Radha Krishna Khanna remembers:

“It so happened that one of the satsangis, who was a medical student, was anxious that if there was any transfusion of blood to be given to the Master as the doctors there suggested, it should be his blood. When his blood was tested, it did not quite match with the Master's and medically, it was not the proper blood to be given. But somehow he got round one of the female sevadars and persuaded her into agreeing that his blood be given. Being a medical student, he told her, ‘Well, there is not much of a difference.’”<sup>24</sup>

The transfusion was given and the effect on Hazur was almost fatal, though by the next morning he was recovering well.

One of those present in Amritsar at this time was Gurbaksh Singh Randhir, (not to be confused with Gurbax Singh Randhir - subject of Appendix A), the son of Harnam Singh, who was one of Hazur's earliest initiates and a associate of Kirpal Singh at Lahore in both the satsang and the civil service. They had retired at the same time, and Harnam Singh had taken a house next to Kirpal Singh at Beas. Gurbaksh Singh was among those tested for blood compatibility, and had been sent to Amritsar as a blood donor.

Gurbaksh Singh Randhir recalls the events:

“It was decided that this humble fellow would be the one whose blood should be given. So, it was a privilege that at night, say 10:30 or 11:00 p.m., the Master Himself (Kirpal Singh) came to my house at Beas and knocked at the door and said, ‘Harnam Singh, come down. Your son has been selected for giving a blood transfusion for the Master at Amritsar. The Master has deputed me to get your permission.’

“My father started weeping. ‘Look here, my son is Master’s son. It is a privilege if he gives there. I don't mind.’

“So, the next day I was taken to Amritsar. I was selected by the Master, but some beloved Satsangis who were after serving the Master got themselves passed and got myself failed. They transferred their own blood. It was because of that, that there was trouble. They gave their blood instead of the man who had been chosen, who had been passed by the doctor.

“Throughout the night the Great Master was in trouble. When I came back the doctor told me, ‘Well, they have played the trick.’

“I was just by the side of the bed of the Great Master throughout the night. I was there, Bibi Lajo was there and Dr. Rhada Singh was there. In the dead of the night I got hold of a diary just under the pillow of the Master. It was written in there: ‘I will be poisoned on such and such a date, but by the morning at 8:00 a.m. I will be all right. It is only night that we have to pass.’

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<sup>24</sup> *The Ocean of Grace Divine.* editor Bhadra Sena, Delhi, 1976, p.26

“I told this to Bibi Lajo and she is a witness. Early morning at 8:00 a.m. Bibi Lajo came. Master Sawan Singh was all right, hale and hearty. He brushed His teeth, tied His turban, had His tea and said, ‘Now sing some song, sing some shabd.’ So this was the miracle which I saw with my own eyes.”<sup>25</sup>

Radha Krishna Khanna discusses the same event:

“I was very angry over all this. I was thinking that we should complain to the Master that it was due to this sevadar that the wrong blood was given. But Maharaj Kirpal Singh said, ‘Well, forgive her. Now he has recovered. Whatever had to happen, has happened.’”<sup>26</sup>

That day a medicine was prescribed that could not be obtained in Amritsar, so several people were sent by car to Jullundur. At this time Bibi Hardevi was ordered by Hazur to travel in the same car and to bring back Kirpal Singh, commenting that he was required for some urgent work. Kirpal Singh arrived late that night and remained with Hazur for the rest of Hazur's stay in Amritsar.

Kirpal Singh described the events in his first publication after the passing of Hazur:

“His health improved a little at Amritsar but it became worse on 4th October, 1947. On the 5th October 1947, Hazur sent for me from Beas. In a week's time his condition was again better.

“On the morning of 12th October 1947, at 7 o'clock He called me. When I was present in His august presence, He said, ‘Kirpal Singh! I have allotted all other work but have not

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<sup>25</sup> *Rubani Newsletter*. Sept.-Oct., 1975, pp. 53-54

<sup>26</sup> *The Ocean of Grace Divine*. Ibid. p. 26

The female sevadar who accepted the blood of the young medical student was none other than Bibi Lajo.

Bibi Lajwanti, otherwise known as Bibi Lajo, spent forty years in the Dera. A tall woman with a noble and intelligent face, she first came to Dera with her family around 1910 as a child, and spent the majority of her years at Dera in the personal service of Baba Sawan Singh, as one of several primary female attendants. She also authored a Punjabi book of stories of Hazur titled *Sakhya*. It is an interesting fact that it is difficult, verging on impossible, to find references to her in the Beas literature, other than a single photo on page 167 of *Glimpses of the Great Master*. Essentially, she has been erased from Dera histories of the period. On the other hand there are dozens of references to Bibi Ralli, who also served Hazur closely from an early period in his ministry. There may be several reasons for this. On the one hand, after the passing of Baba Sawan Singh, Bibi Ralli remained at Dera in the service of S.B. Jagat Singh, whereas Bibi Lajo left and was associated with Sant Kirpal Singh throughout his ministry, though she retained connections to Beas. Her account of several experiences with Kirpal Singh during his discipleship, recorded about 1975, is the lead article in the book, *The Ocean of Grace Divine*.

Raj Kumari Rajput, Bibi Lajo's close aide from the early fifties right up to her passing, now lives in Minneapolis. She was initiated by Sant Kirpal Singh in 1956. Discussions with her during the writing of this paper provided the information on Bibi Lajo's view of events; furthermore, Mrs. Rajput has reviewed and approved every comment attributed to Bibi Lajo as her accurate recollection of the latter's remembrances.

According to Mrs. Rajput, Bibi Lajo also mentioned that there were tensions between the principal female sevadars that apparently influenced some of the politics. Despite her being stricken from Beas literature describing Hazur's household, Bibi Lajwanti was later a periodic visitor at Dera on the invitation of Charan Singh, to whom she had been a kind of aunt. She spent her last months at Dera and was cremated there after her passing in the early eighties.

entrusted my task of Naam initiation and spiritual work to anyone. That I confer to you today so that this holy and sacred science may flourish.’

“Hearing this my eyes were filled with tears, and afflicted as I was, I beseeched: ‘Hazur! The peace and security that I have in sitting at thy feet here cannot be had in higher planes...’ My heart was filled with anguish, I could not speak any more and sat staring -- Hazur encouraging and caressing me all the time.”<sup>27</sup>

Kirpal Singh’s grief was born of the realization that this event implied the imminent passing of his Guru. In a talk given on April 2, 1959, Kirpal Singh described his reaction in this way:

“I began to weep profusely -- what son wants his father to die! He said, ‘Do not worry, you have a lot of work ahead of you.’”<sup>28</sup> Pita Poot tells us that both Bibi Hardevi and Bibi Ralli were in the room during this meeting.

Darshan Singh, then in service in Delhi, traveled to Amritsar in mid-October on the suggestion of his father, Kirpal Singh, in order to be near Hazur. He tells us in his autobiographical account:

“It was at this trip in October that my father first told me that Hazur had entrusted to him the responsibility of spiritual initiation and satsang work after the great Master would leave his body.

“My Father said, ‘I have earnestly and fervently pleaded with him not to leave us. I have entreated him to stay on among us and said I would dance to whatever tune pleases him. But Hazur had been firm, saying that he was bound not so much by the prayers of his disciples as by the wishes of his own Master, Baba Jaimal Singh Ji Maharaj.’”<sup>29</sup>

Daryai Lal Kapur and Charan Singh add a contradictory note to this story. In *Heaven on Earth* Kapur mentions that in the first week of October, Charan Singh arrived at Dera on the way to Amritsar. Kapur writes that Charan Singh found that with the exception of Jagat Singh “all of the Dera administrators were in Amritsar on one excuse or another.”<sup>30</sup> Kapur further says that Baba Sawan Singh’s response on hearing all this from Charan Singh, was to

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<sup>27</sup> *A Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj*. Kirpal Singh, Ruhani Satsang, Delhi, 1949, p.11. The reference to, “all other work,” refers to the plan drawn up in mid-September 1947 by Sawan Singh in consultation with other Dera principles for the administration of the Dera. This was formalized in a will dated September 24, 1947. Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh was designated Vice-President of the Managing Committee under Hazur as President. Kirpal Singh was put in charge of satsang affairs (spiritual discourses) with Gulab Singh as his assistant. The will stated, “After me Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh shall be the President of all these three committees, and all the above mentioned religious properties shall be transferred to him.” (*Heaven On Earth*. Ibid. page 203).

This is generally regarded by Beas as a clear and early indication of Hazur’s wishes regarding succession. Yet, less than three weeks later, Hazur, according to Kirpal Singh, commissioned his spiritual succession with the words, “I have allotted *all other work* but have not entrusted my work of Naam initiation and spiritual work to anyone...” This timing of this event is verified by his son, Darshan Singh, to whom Kirpal Singh spoke about it only days after. This suggests that Baba Sawan Singh is drawing a distinction between the spiritual and temporal direction of his mission after his passing.

<sup>28</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. Feb./Mar., 1985, p. 21

<sup>29</sup> *Love Has Only A Beginning. - Autobiography of Darshan Singh*. SK Publications, Delhi, India, 1996, p. 72

<sup>30</sup> *Heaven on Earth*. Daryai Lal Kapur, Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Punjab, 1986 pp. 246-247

state with tears in his eyes that only Jagat Singh had obeyed him. Charan Singh himself tells this same story and specifically mentions Kirpal Singh's name among those he noted to be absent.<sup>31</sup> As mentioned, Kirpal Singh was ordered by Hazur to remain at Dera to help Muslim immigrants, which he did. Only when he was ordered by Hazur to come to Amritsar did he do so.

Following events in Amritsar, Kirpal Singh's talks with Hazur concerned the future, "After this whenever I had the honour to be in seclusion with Hazur, He talked about the interior affairs of Dera and instructed me how to act when he departed for ever."<sup>32</sup>

In November 1947, Kirpal Singh presented to Baba Sawan Singh his concept for 'Ruhani Satsang,' a format for presenting Sant Mat outside of the confines of Beas. On many occasions Kirpal Singh stated the Ruhani Satsang was approved by Hazur during his lifetime. In one place he even tells us that Baba Sawan Singh personally coined the name for the future organization. "The name 'RUHANI SATSANG'...was suggested by His Holy Self..."<sup>33</sup>

In a later talk Kirpal Singh remarked: "The Sacred Forum of Ruhani Satsang was approved by Hazur and under His explicit orders it came into existence some fourteen years ago."<sup>34</sup>

Munshi Ram writes in his diary note for Feb.17th 1948: "The pull of Huzur's consciousness is turning inward, and His attention comes out very rarely. He always says that whatever Satguru is doing is for His good; but sometimes He also says that now His mind does not want to come into this world."<sup>35</sup>

According to Pita Poot in early March of 1948 one morning Baba Sawan Singh sent his servant Gandhi to bring Kirpal Singh and Bibi Hardevi. Upon their meeting Hazur said that everyday Kirpal Singh was begging him to stay, but today the decision would be made and he could try his hardest. Then Sawan Singh had Kirpal Singh sit in Bhajan (meditation) and Hazur also went inside. In his meditation Kirpal Singh came to a congregation of Masters of the lineage. Pleading on behalf of the sangat, he begged them not to take Hazur. All agreed, but Baba Jaimal Singh said, "No, Babu Ji cannot stay." (Babu Ji was the term with which Jaimal Singh addressed Sawan Singh.) When they came out of meditation Baba Sawan Singh said to Kirpal Singh that he had now seen for himself that Baba Ji would not allow him to stay longer.

According to detailed accounts by Dr. Pierre Schmidt and Lala Munshi Ram, as well as supporting statements by Charan Singh, on March 20, 1948, Baba Sawan Singh, in full possession of his senses and with no pressure, sat up in bed and signed a will naming Jagat Singh as his spiritual successor, in the presence of these and several other persons, including Jagat Singh himself. According to Daryai Lal Kapur, Sawan Singh had given verbal authorization to Jagat Singh that very day. Charan Singh says, "We had great respect for Sardar Bahadur and we knew he was the successor--the will was executed in my presence, I am a witness to the will--and the Great Master himself had told us many things about Sardar Bahadur and instructed us: 'You should respect him and take him in my place.'"<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Spiritual Heritage*. Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, Punjab, 1983

<sup>32</sup> *A Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji*. Ibid. p. 11

<sup>33</sup> Message on the death anniversary of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh. Kirpal Singh, April 2, 1955

<sup>34</sup> Circular 22, Talk delivered by Kirpal Singh on July 26, 1962

<sup>35</sup> *With The Three Masters*. RS Satsang Beas, 1967, Vol. 2, p. 26

<sup>36</sup> *Spiritual Heritage*. (from tape-recorded talks) Maharaj Charan Singh. RS Satsang Beas. p. 231

Despite the vivid and detailed accounts, Kirpal Singh's associates question the veracity of the will. They also question the circumstances of its signing as well as the secrecy which surrounds the document itself. The original, it is claimed, has never been seen. Versions of the will found in several Beas books are never facsimile copies, but merely typed reproductions.

Malik Radha Krishna Khanna, the attorney who played a major role in drafting earlier legal documents for Hazur, including several of his wills, was not present at the Dera at the time of the will signing. He had been sent for and replied that he would arrive on the twenty third of March. According to Pita Poot, on Khanna's arrival at Dera, Kirpal Singh told him that he had been called to write a will and suggested he ask as to whether the will was written or not. Khanna inquired repeatedly about the will but was neither shown the document or told anything about it. He left the Dera before the satsang of Sunday, the 28th of March.

In the accounts by Pierre Schmidt and Munshi Ram of the will signing, we are told that Baba Sawan Singh sat up and carefully read and signed the document unaided. This may not be the whole story, but rather an idealized rendering. It has been often stated that in the last weeks of Baba Sawan Singh's life, he was too weak to hold a pen. Apparently, many important documents went unsigned for this reason. Bibi Lajo, one of the closest personal attendants of Hazur, was emphatic on this point, according to her close aide, Raj Kumari Rujpat.

There is at least some objective evidence for this: In the book *Glimpses of the Great Master*, a photographic essay on the life of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, there are several interesting pictures on page 199. These outdoor photographs show Dr. Schmidt holding up the end of a pen as a very frail looking Baba Sawan Singh, signs his name to a blank sheet of Dera Beas letterhead, while gripping the side of the table with his other hand, seemingly to steady himself.

Bibi Lajo had a very different version of the will signing that completely contradicts Beas's official accounts. According to Mrs. Rajput, Bibi Lajo's aide throughout the majority of her years after the passing of Hazur, Bibi Lajo was present when the will was "signed," and that Baba Sawan Singh was not conscious but that rather a pen was put in his hand and guided to sign the document. In none of the official Beas accounts is Bibi Lajo's presence at the signing mentioned, though this is consistent with the fact that she is not mentioned in any English Beas publications discussing Beas history. However, since she was in constant attendance upon Hazur throughout this period, she could well have been present.

According to Pita Poot and *Truth Triumphant*, on the 27th of March there was a meeting of about seven members of the Dera management committee including Kirpal Singh and S.B. Jagat Singh. Jagat Singh left immediately upon conclusion of the meeting. Shortly after this Bibi Ralli came to the meeting room and stated that an announcement was to be made by Kirpal Singh after the satsang the next day. Kirpal Singh inquired from Bibi Ralli as well as Munshi Ram, Dera secretary, as to what it was that must be declared. Munshi Ram stated that S.B. Jagat Singh had been chosen as Hazur's successor and since Kirpal Singh was in charge of the satsang he should declare it to the sangat. As the signing of the will had not officially been revealed to anyone, the management committee members expressed surprise and insisted that Hazur should somehow make the announcement himself by using a microphone to address the sangat from his room. Kirpal Singh agreed, saying that since Hazur was still with them, if such an announcement were deemed necessary, Hazur should do so himself.

Kirpal Singh and Munshi Ram then went to the residence of Hazur, where a discussion ensued in the room next to the Master. Jagat Singh, Sardar Harbans Singh (son of Sawan Singh), Purshottam Singh (grandson), Radha Krishna Khanna, and Dr. Pierre Schmidt were



present. Dr. Schmidt said to Kirpal Singh that since he was in charge of the satsang, whatever Hazur had done, he should announce it. Kirpal Singh replied that the announcement could be made by a personage who was told about this, or else Hazur could order him to do it, however, since he had no personal knowledge of this order he would not announce it.

Despite Kirpal Singh's objections Munshi Ram and others continued to insist that he should make the announcement. Kirpal Singh stated that the only thing he would say to the sangat was that some instructions were there but that he had no firsthand knowledge of it. He said to Dr. Schmidt that he must have seen the will, and must be familiar with its contents. The Doctor replied that he was sorry but that he could not say anything about it, adding that he was under an oath.



**Bibi Lajo** (left) with Bibi Ralli (Right).

The version of these events found in the Urdu account by Munshi Ram, as translated by Daryai Lal Kapur for his book, *Heaven on Earth*, puts a different spin on the same information and offers a somewhat different account of the events;

“On Saturday night Bibi Ralli, Sardar Bachint Singh, and I felt that since Huzur had appointed Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh as his successor and made a will to that effect, and as this news had reached all the prominent satsangis, it would therefore be better to inform the sangat about this on the next day--Sunday--at the monthly satsang. We called Malik Radha Kishan and Sardar Kirpal Singh into the office room so that we could confer with them too. We suggested that the next day at the end of the discourse, Sardar Kirpal Singh should announce to the sangat that Huzur had appointed Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh as his successor by a will. But Malik Radha Kishan and

Sardar Kirpal Singh objected to this, saying that on hearing this announcement the sangat would be in tears; only this much should be declared--that Huzur has appointed his successor. So the next day, Sardar Kirpal Singh made that announcement at the end of the satsang.”<sup>37</sup>

Daryai Lal Kapur's comments follow:

“Although Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh's name was withheld in the announcement, the sangat came to know the name of the successor chosen by Huzur, and within a few hours his name was on every satsangi's lips.”

The differences between these two versions of the same event are worthy of a closer examination. According to Kirpal Singh's associates, he was reluctant to make an announcement of Jagat Singh's succession, as requested by the administrators and family, as he had no firsthand knowledge about it; he was not shown the will and had no confirmation from Hazur. In fact, to make such a serious announcement without direct instructions from Hazur, would have amounted to passing along hearsay.

On the other hand, according to Munshi Ram's version, Kirpal Singh disputes the assignment on entirely different grounds, using a weak excuse to avoid the administrator's request. According to Munshi Ram, Kirpal Singh was reluctant to announce Jagat Singh's name since “the sangat would be in tears.” Yet, on the other hand, he is willing to state that a

<sup>37</sup> Translated from the original Urdu version of *With the Three Masters. Heaven on Earth*. Ibid. pp. 208-209

successor had been appointed. Announcing that there was a successor, named or not, would be a clear signal of Hazur's imminent demise, a certain cause for grief. The logic is hard to follow that naming the successor could evoke the sangat's grief, but that stating there was a successor without naming him would not cause grief. In plain terms, it doesn't make sense. It is very hard to believe that this illogical excuse was advanced by either Kirpal Singh or Radha Krishna Khanna. A more plausible explanation is that this phrasing was chosen to make it appear that Kirpal Singh was anxious to suppress the information. This may well be another instance where Beas authorities sought to discredit Kirpal Singh, examples of which we have already seen and will see again.

Perhaps making the announcement while Hazur was still alive was meant to give Jagat Singh's succession added credibility, though Hazur was well removed from all these discussions and events. (There is not the slightest indication that he was consulted by those promoting the announcement of the succession). Perhaps Jagat Singh's supporters insisted that Kirpal Singh make the announcement because of his credibility with the sangat, not well remembered by posterity, but supported by numerous testimonies and suggested here.

In 1951, when Charan Singh was named in a will to succeed Jagat Singh, he made careful and repeated inquiries from various individuals in order to ascertain the will's authenticity. (See *Heaven on Earth*, page 205). In other words, even he, supposedly a witness to the Baba Sawan Singh will, did not accept Jagat Singh's will at face value. Yet Kirpal Singh was told to announce to the entire sangat the name of Hazur's successor, without even being shown the will or being allowed to get direct information from Hazur.

According to Pita Poot, later the same evening, Radha Krishna Khanna and Sardar Bachint Singh went to the residence of Kirpal Singh to inquire as to his welfare. With great sorrow, Kirpal Singh replied that people were after the gaddi (the guruship), but that the wife was crying for the life of her husband.

According to Mrs. Rajput, sometime after the management committee meeting of Saturday the 27th, where Jagat Singh's nomination was first announced, Bibi Lajo spoke with Baba Sawan Singh about the matter of succession. She had not only been thoroughly convinced that Kirpal Singh was the successor, but some days before, seeing how things were going, had hoped to have the satsang ghar of Amritsar taken out of Dera's ownership and put back in her family name (her in-laws had donated the property), in anticipation of Kirpal Singh's departure from Beas. She had hoped to donate it to Kirpal Singh's mission at the appropriate time.<sup>38</sup> Possibly due to Baba Sawan Singh's health she was unable to press the matter. However, after the management meeting she decided to have a direct talk with Hazur.

She expressed her conviction that Kirpal Singh was to be the Master and talked about the fraudulent will signing. According to Mrs. Rajput's account, Baba Sawan Singh replied that it was fine for Sardar Bahadur to serve at Dera, but that "Kirpal Singh will serve the world

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<sup>38</sup> See *Treasure Beyond Measure*. Ibid. P. 67-69 for an intriguing version of this event. In brief, Charan Singh, an attorney, then about 31, is told that "one of the sevardanis (lady sevadars)" (Bibi Lajo's name is not mentioned) was attempting to have the ownership of the Amritsar Satsang ghar transferred to herself as a reward "for her devoted service to the Great Master." Charan Singh becomes extremely upset and confused and, apparently unwilling to speak to her directly, decides to pick her pocket in the dead of night in order to confirm the document's existence. He read the document and then slipped it back in her pocket. As a result of all this, "he was very miserable," unable to decide if it was really any of his business whether the Master chose to sign it or not, yet concerned that it would be obtained by fraud. After hours of worrying over the matter, he went to Baba Sawan Singh later the same day. Before Charan Singh had a chance to raise the subject, Baba Sawan Singh gave Charan Singh his pen to keep with him, telling him he will call him when anything needed to be signed. Charan Singh felt relieved thinking that his problem had been solved.

much more than Beas. Kirpal Singh is the only one who can serve the world after me, and his name will be found written on every leaf of every tree.”<sup>39</sup> He added that if he named Kirpal Singh there would be no peace among the administration and family at Beas.

March 28th was the last Sunday satsang during the life of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh. At the conclusion of the satsang, Kirpal Singh said that Lala Munshi Ram had some announcements regarding arrangements for the management of the Dera, stating that he personally had no knowledge of it. He added, “that all of them assembled there should pray to God that Hazur should himself take care of all of them.” (Truth Triumphant, page 13). This is a significant comment in contrast to the surrounding events. Kirpal Singh is asking the sangat to put their focus on the fact that Hazur was yet alive, to pray for his life and his love, not to be concerned with what is yet irrelevant, i.e.; succession. Here he is drawing a firm line between his own position and that of the dominant administration and family.

After Munshi Ram's announcement a number of prominent satsangis, including L.R. Puri, tried to go up to ask Hazur directly, who at this time could still speak. They were turned away. The next day an attempt was made again with the same result.

Gyani Bhagwan Singh, Kirpal Singh's secretary, tells us:

“One day at the end of the monthly Satsang at Beas--probably it was on the 31st of March 1948 (it was actually the 28th--NT) when Hazur was very ill, Bhapa Kirpal Singh Ji announced to the Sangat that certain arrangements had been made at Beas for the administration, etc., and other such vague information. After Satsang was over, he went to his brother's house and I also went with him. I asked point blank, ‘Bhapa Ji, what you said in the Satsang was quite vague, and I want to have the correct meaning. I want to know exactly who is the person whom Baba Sawan Singh Ji has nominated as His successor, to whom he has given the Power to initiate.’ This was my straight question; and his straight reply was in these few words, ‘That work has already been entrusted to me.’”<sup>40</sup>

It is a matter of supreme irony that Kirpal Singh was put in the unusual and difficult position of being asked to announce a will naming Jagat Singh as successor; a will of which he had no firsthand knowledge and plainly regarded as a fiction. Strangely enough he was never shown the documentary evidence whose content he was asked to present. Moreover, he was also prevented from discussing the matter with Hazur prior to the satsang of March 28th, when the administrators had decided the announcement of Hazur's successor should be made and that he was to be the message bearer. Furthermore, the credible accounts of witnesses to the will are shadowed by credible dissenting testimony. There is also photographic evidence to the effect that Hazur could not hold a pen during the period in which he is said to have signed the will unaided.

Now, in those final few days, a new and dramatic situation arose. Kirpal Singh, in his 1949 account, writes about Hazur:

“From the evening of 29th March to the morning of 1st April, unusual restlessness and visible fluttering was seen visiting His physical frame. The symptoms were also created for putting to test those surrounding Him.”

According to Pita Poot in the early morning hours of March 30th, Kirpal Singh and Dr. Schmidt went to Hazur. He was in great pain. Dr. Schmidt was at a loss as to why this should be. Shortly after, Bibi Ralli reminded Bibi Hardevi that Hazur had prophesied on

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<sup>39</sup> A very similar metaphor used by Baba Sawan Singh is found on page 105 of *Heaven On Earth*. While discussing a family land purchase soon after his retirement, Baba Sawan Singh's son protests the location. Baba Sawan Singh reportedly replies, “Don't worry son. Every thorny shrub here will one day resound with the greeting, ‘Radha Soami.’”

<sup>40</sup> *The Ocean of Grace Divine*. Ibid. p. 18

several occasions throughout his illness that at the end he would be in great pain but that when the person who would continue his work sat by him he would get relief.

Kirpal Singh writes, "Throughout the period of His illness Hazur said many a time: 'If a person proficient in Bhajan and Simran sits by me, I feel comforted and relieved. Therefore those who come to me or sit near me should do Simran.'

"Accordingly at the time of appearance of this symptom of 'fluttering of the body' Hazur again spoke several times these words: 'If the person who has to do the work of spirituality after I depart, comes and sits by me, my trouble will be gone.'

"To comply with this -- evidently last wish of the Master -- the near relatives of Hazur came and sat in Bhajan and Simran one by one, by the side of the bed of Hazur, but there was no relief whatever in the fluttering symptom of Hazur's body."

According to Pita Poot, on the morning of the first of April at about six, Bibi Ralli took Kirpal Singh to the room of Hazur and then left. Hazur, with eyes closed, was restless and in pain. Kirpal Singh writes:

"On the morning of 1st April, 1948, it was extremely benevolent of Hazur to afford a chance to this humble servant - of course through the assistance of a lady in nursing service of Hazur - to be by the side of Master, in seclusion, for about ten or fifteen minutes. At that time with a heavy heart I sat near his bed and prayed to Hazur."

Kirpal Singh prayed to his Master on behalf of the satsangis, who could not bear the sight of his suffering, to remove this sign of illness from his body. "It is true that prayer succeeds where all other human efforts fail. Hazur with His utmost benevolence accepted this prayer."

When Kirpal Singh opened his eyes he found that Hazur was lying in perfect repose and was gazing at him. Kirpal Singh then describes the event that he would later declare was integral to the succession process: the transmission of "the life impulse" from the eyes of the Living Guru to his successor. In his 1949 account Kirpal Singh writes:

"Hazur steadily kept gazing for three or four minutes into my eyes, and my eyes, in silent wonderment, experienced an indescribable delight which infused intoxication down to the remotest core of my entire body - such as was never before experienced in my whole life."<sup>41</sup>

In one account Kirpal Singh says, "He opened his eyes and gazed into mine for three or four minutes. There was charging like an electric current passing from head to foot. He gave me his life impulse then closed his eyes, never to open them again."<sup>42</sup>

In 1955 he wrote, "The authority of giving initiation into the beyond and contacting with the Word, which he vouchsafed to me verbally on October 12, 1947, was thus completely transferred while going. The intoxication of that glance is still the life of my soul."<sup>43</sup>

Later, Dr. Schmidt announced that Hazur would pass on that night. Kirpal Singh recalls, "The doctor attending on him said that Hazur would leave the same night. I called together the members of Hazur's household (the personal attendants) and asked, 'Do you find Hazur in any pain now?' They said, 'None whatsoever.' 'Does he not look as bright as ever?' I asked. 'Yes, yes, very like his old self,' they said. I told them Hazur would depart from his earthly life in the morning."<sup>44</sup>

These last comments lead one to reflect on the state in which Kirpal Singh must have found himself at this time--still in the aura of a supernal experience, yet also torn with

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<sup>41</sup> *Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji*. Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. Feb-March 1985. p. 22

<sup>43</sup> Message on the death anniversary of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj. April 2, 1955

<sup>44</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. February/March 1985, p. 22

emotion by the imminent event whose postponement had long been the center of his prayers.

At 2:30 A.M. Dr. Schmidt, Kirpal Singh, and Bibi Hardevi joined others already present in Hazur's room. As Dr. Schmidt sat close to Hazur on one side, holding his hand, Kirpal Singh standing on the other side, with S.B.Jagat Singh, various family members and close sevadars present, Hazur Baba Sawan Ji Maharaj drew his last breath at about 8:30 AM, Friday April 2, 1948.

Among the last images in *Glimpses of the Great Master*, on page 204, are two remarkable photos in which Kirpal Singh is the only presence from among the prominent Dera satsangis. The very last photo is a full page, artistically rendered image of the burning funeral pyre. The previous two photos both include Kirpal Singh. In the first, his is the one discernible face, as he leads the party carrying the bier along the banks of the Beas River. In the second, he is standing on the sandy soil near to the bier's resting place, his hands clasped in front of him, and despite the poor quality of the picture, one can easily perceive the grief that is plainly etched upon his brow.

### **The Aftermath**

Several days after the cremation of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji's mortal remains, Kirpal Singh left Dera never to return. He went to Delhi, which he had periodically visited during the later years of his discipleship, and which had become the watershed for tens of thousands of refugees from the horrors of partition. Here Kirpal Singh, was awaited by his eldest son, Darshan Singh, and his family. In mid-April he gave his first satsang as Master, shedding tears and saying, "A general sits in his tent and sends a message boy to convey his orders; this is my position." Soon after, he left for almost six months retreat in the Rishikesh district. When he returned he was joined by many of his old associates from Lahore and Beas, as well as a large number of the Delhi satsang. These were the people who knew him and recognized what he had become. They loved and trusted him above all other prevailing opinions. Over time thousands of initiates of Hazur came to accept Kirpal Singh as their Master's successor.

Baba Sawan Singh had said to Kirpal Singh, "You have to carry on the mission under the orders of your Master. Do not care if Mrs. Grundy grunts."<sup>45</sup>

At Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh was formally installed as Baba Sawan Singh's successor on Wednesday, April 13, 1948. Spiritual leaders from various groups that had been associated with Baba Sawan Singh were represented, including Baba Deva Singh of Tarn Taran. Sardar Bachint Singh, the eldest son of Baba Sawan Singh, gave a speech in which he said, "...on March 19 Huzur Maharaj Ji sent for me and said, 'I am happy that my sons are obedient and devoted. Just as you and Harbans Singh are my sons, so also is Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh. Always obey him in all matters. Increase your love and devotion for him and look upon him as my own form.'"

In Jagat Singh's speech he described how he had refused the Mastership but then had to submit when Baba Sawan Singh firmly said, "Jagat Singh, these are my orders." Jagat Singh added, "I am chronically ill and incapable of doing much, but it is my duty to obey Hazur's orders." (excerpts from *Heaven on Earth*)

It was, by all accounts, a difficult transition, as with the loss of Hazur, "the heart was taken out of the Dera," and the return to normalcy was a slow one. Many sevadars and old satsangis left Beas and did not return for many months. Furthermore, the administration was in poor shape, in some instances it had become dominated by autocratic sevadars who

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<sup>45</sup> *Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj*. Ibid. p. 21

ran their position like a fiefdom. It was left to Charan Singh to apply the necessary repairs during the early period of his eventual succession.

Although those supporting Jagat Singh's succession referred to the will, to more than a few satsangis it was not a cut and dry matter. Indeed, even among the several hundred American initiates of Baba Sawan Singh, there was less than unanimity about the succession. A number of American disciples when they learned of Kirpal Singh, generally through T.S. Khanna<sup>46</sup>, became enthusiastically involved.

Among these was Dr. Brock himself, who along with his wife were Baba Sawan Singh's first American initiates (1911), as well as his first American representative permitted to read initiation instructions. Mrs. Brock passed away during the lifetime of Hazur, however Dr. Brock became a group leader for Sant Kirpal Singh, and in 1955 personally gave him a manuscript of the letters the couple had received from Hazur over the years. A photo of Dr. Brock with Sant Kirpal Singh can be found in *Portrait of Perfection*. In the book, *As They Saw The Master*, published following Sant Kirpal Singh's first tour in 1955, Dr. Brock wrote:

"In our correspondence (with Baba Sawan Singh), I at one time asked, 'in case he passed on before I did, would I know who the new Master would be?' and he said I would. So I was quite satisfied when Mr. Khanna put me in touch with Sant Kirpal Singh.....In Sant Kirpal Singh, I think every one recognizes the unbounded spirit of love that permeates him and everything he does, regardless of who or what people are or may have been."

Others, despite their affiliation with Beas, maintained discreet contact with Kirpal Singh. One example was Mrs. Schmidt, wife of the famous Swiss homeopathic physician Pierre Schmidt, the doctor who had tended Hazur in his last months and claimed to have witnessed the signing of the will. Though Dr. Schmidt functioned as an initiating representative for the Beas Gurus in Europe, his wife, originally a follower of another guru, had ultimately sought initiation from Baba Sawan Singh largely on the basis of her discussions with Kirpal Singh. She maintained correspondence with Kirpal Singh throughout his ministry.<sup>47</sup>

As is well known Sant Kirpal Singh, attracted a considerable following in his lifetime, developing a viable world-wide organization. Along with this he expanded the nature of his mission into active humanitarian efforts.

At Dera, Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh was able to build on the firm foundation of majority support for his succession and the migration of many initiates from what had become Pakistan, to the Beas area. In his few short years as guru, he initiated roughly sixteen thousand people. His death and succession by a young Charan Singh in late 1951, paved the way for a new era of consolidation and growth at Dera, which has prospered to this day. By the mid-fifties Beas reached a critical mass of numbers, precipitating a rapid growth cycle. The result has been that from about 125,000 at the end of Baba Sawan Singh's life, today Radhasoami Beas numbers about 1.4 million initiates.

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<sup>46</sup> Trilochan Singh Khanna was initiated by Baba Sawan Singh in 1928. He was convinced during Hazur's lifetime that Kirpal Singh would be Hazur's successor, and he was present at Kirpal Singh's first satsang in Delhi. Working for the Indian Consul in 1949 he was transferred to Canada and not long after, to the United States. Before he left India Sant Kirpal Singh gave Khanna a list of some of Hazur's American initiates to be contacted. He had early correspondence with a number of American Sawan Singh initiates, including Dona Kelly, who soon became Sant Kirpal Singh's representative for the western United States. Khanna was helpful in the development of Sant Kirpal Singh's American following. Furthermore, he was also instrumental to the success of Kirpal Singh's first two American tours in 1955 and 1963.

<sup>47</sup> *Heart to Heart Talks*. Vol. 2. pp. 120-121

In considering the nature of the Beas guruship, we may say that it has been essentially conservative in nature. Dera Beas is an institution in every sense of the word and the Beas guruship has remained centered around the traditions built up over the century of its existence. When the Guru arrives for satsang he is greeted by a resounding intonation of the term RADHA SOAMI by the assembled thousands. Dera as a physical place and the guru gaddi are essentially indistinguishable as evidenced by the various Beas books decorated with pictures of the Satsang Ghar.

An indication of Dera conservatism is found in the age restrictions on initiation. Though Baba Sawan Singh himself often initiated children and young people, at Dera the age requirements have become progressively stricter. No one can be initiated until their early twenties (the age restriction was recently raised to twenty-five), and only if they are married or their life is otherwise settled.<sup>48</sup>



Modern view of the Beas satsang ghar, built under the auspices of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh in the 1930's, the unofficial symbol of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas.

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<sup>48</sup> Darshan Singh was formally initiated at age 13, though he had famously been given a meditation sitting by Hazur at age 5. T.S. Khanna was also initiated at age 13. There are photographs in several Beas publications of Baba Sawan Singh initiating a group of children at Kalabagh. In Ruhani Satsang and its successor organization, initiation into the inner Sound is given to children, and the Five Names are given to those fifteen and over.

## A LETTER AND AN APOLOGY

In January 1952, Kirpal Singh allegedly<sup>49</sup> wrote a private letter to an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh. The letter stated that the very recent incumbent of the guruship at Beas, Charan Singh, (1916-1990, eldest grandson of Baba Sawan Singh), had put up money and made a written agreement for the transfer of the Beas guruship to a relative after a lapse of two or three years. The relative was the grandson of Sardar Bachint Singh (eldest son of Baba Sawan Singh). The man to whom this letter was reportedly written, Prem Singh Bhandari, was affiliated with Beas and apparently forwarded the letter to Dera. Beas attorneys threatened a defamation suit and demanded an apology from Kirpal Singh. The apology was forthcoming along with a solemn agreement made by Charan Singh that the apology would not be made public.

Later, with the publication of *Firdaus Barin Urf Roo-Zamin* by Daryai Lal Kapur (Urdu language, R.S. Beas, 1968) this solemn agreement was broken and the apology was published. Copies of the apology were then made available to Radha Soami Beas representatives worldwide. The apology was offered by Beas representatives to inquiring seekers, in order to indicate that Kirpal Singh had admitted making a false statement. Although the original letter has never been seen, we are fortunate that Kirpal Singh's apology restated the allegation that Charan Singh had attempted to arrange his early abdication.

This incident, unknown to a majority of initiates, is a microcosm for highlighting a number of issues of succession and is most interesting to review in the light of posterity as we shall see.

Indeed, it is ironic that the circulation of the offending letter was eventually undertaken by the Dera administration itself, despite their agreement not to publish it. This was in the form of the apology, which, fortunately, restates the letter's allegations verbatim.

Could Kirpal Singh have written this letter? If he did, what might have been his motives? Let us briefly review some of the features of Kirpal Singh's life in order to create a context for analysing the letter and its aftermath. Kirpal Singh's references to his childhood and youth, well corroborated by various family members, tell of his prophetic abilities and intellectual prowess from an early age. In 1917, Kirpal Singh, following a blessing by his father, began having regular visions of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, whom he took to be Guru Nanak, in his meditation as well as with open eyes. "My Master began to appear to me when I sat in meditation or when I was doing something."<sup>50</sup> Kirpal Singh tells a remarkable story from 1921 of detecting a disturbance in his concentration which he traced to an orderly who had gossiped that evening when preparing his food.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Though the records of Kirpal Singh's important private correspondence covers the entire period of his guruship, there is no copy of this letter to be found and Beas has never produced a copy of the signed letter.

<sup>50</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. July 1975, p. 6

<sup>51</sup> Kirpal Singh periodically recounted some of the stories of his remarkable youth and discipleship and these can be found scattered throughout his published talks. Many independent accounts by members of his family and acquaintances can also be found in various publications. Some of the most interesting are in *The Ocean of Grace Divine*. Delhi, 1977, and the first several issues of *Ruhani Newsletter* (Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission, 1975). This story is found in the brochure: *Spiritual Aspect of the Vegetarian Diet*.



In 1924, Kirpal Singh met and was initiated by Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji, who gave him hints of his eventual destiny from their earliest meetings<sup>52</sup>, and requested him to meditate six hours minimum daily, a schedule he kept and exceeded throughout his discipleship, over and above his family and responsible civil service position. In the year 1927 he had a vision of the date and manner of Hazur's passing which he recounted in a poem.<sup>53</sup> By the early nineteen thirties Baba Sawan Singh told certain individuals and later the entire satsang of Lahore that between Kirpal Singh and himself there was no difference.<sup>54</sup> In 1938 he had Kirpal Singh conduct a large initiation on his behalf, an unprecedented event. In 1939 Baba Sawan Singh wrote Kirpal Singh an endearing letter, saying to him "...You should do satsang while fulfilling your official duties honestly and also complete your course of Bhajan and Simran. I am greatly pleased with you. You are serving the Lord with all your resources - body, mind, and money."<sup>55</sup> Baba Sawan Singh showered him with numerous gifts including a meditation shawl given him by Baba Jaimal Singh, articles of clothing, as well as the opportunity to copy his complete correspondence with Baba Jaimal Singh.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout this time Kirpal Singh's relationship to Baba Sawan Singh, his devotion to meditation, and his service to the Lahore satsang community, was openly and widely

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<sup>52</sup> "All right, now, you'll have to look after this Dera; go on with it. Those who come, you'll look after them.' These were the words he expressed, the very first time."  
*Sat Sandesh*. July 1975, p. 8

<sup>53</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. July 1976, pp. 1-4

<sup>54</sup> In 1979 I had a discussion with an elderly initiate of Baba Sawan Singh named Shanti Swarup, who had known Kirpal Singh from Lahore. He recounted an incident which occurred about 1930. He said, "In the year of my marriage at age 21, I went to Hazur, up to his room, and just had an argument with him. I said, 'Your sevadars never let me near you, they always find one excuse or another to keep common people away from you.' Hazur replied, 'Listen, you are at Lahore are you not. I have given you Kirpal Singh, who sits in my place.'" Shanti then said that some years later, when Baba Sawan Singh was in Lahore, the people complained saying, "You never come to us as often as at other centers." Baba Sawan Singh replied, "Kirpal Singh is here, is he not? Between he and I there is no difference."

Another account of this incident in Lahore can be found in *The Ocean of Grace Divine*. Another synonymous account from Lahore is found in an unpublished article by Harnam Singh Randir, a very early Sawan Singh initiate who lived at Lahore.

<sup>55</sup> *Portrait of Perfection*. Sawan Kirpal Publications, Bowling Green, 1981, p. 37

<sup>56</sup> On the subject of Baba Jaimal Singh's letters to Baba Sawan Singh, Kirpal Singh tells us, "I've got copies of those original letters with me, true copies which our Master gave to me.... I kept copies with me and returned them in a casket, a very beautiful casket, to the Master. And He said, 'Here is the man who can repeat my words.' But the people said, 'What are you doing?' That very virtue becomes sin in their eyes..." (*Heart to Heart Talks*. Vol. 2, p. 154)

Charan Singh in his forward to *Spiritual Letters*, the Beas translation of Baba Jaimal Singh's correspondence with Sawan Singh is apparently describing the same "casket" when he tells us, "It was early in 1948 when Huzur Maharaj Ji called me to His sick-bed and handed me a silk lined jewel chest. Before parting with it, Maharaj Ji pressed it against His bosom and then, with His eyes moistened with two big pearl-like drops, kissed it with devotion and humility, for it contained the letters which His dearly beloved Satguru had written to Him from time to time."

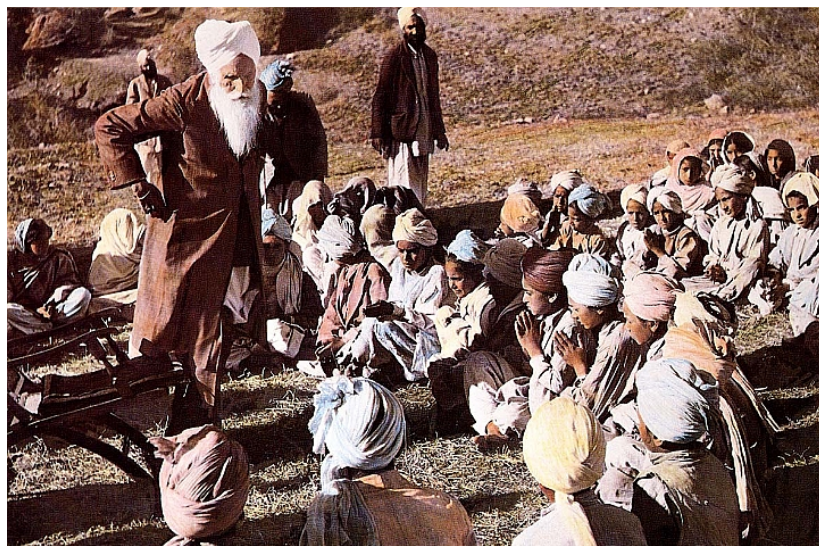
Apparently Baba Sawan Singh had loaned him the letters to review and copy, which Kirpal Singh had later returned in the casket. Some of Kirpal Singh's copies of the letters were translated for use in his biography of Baba Jaimal Singh and several more were subsequently translated for publication in *Sat Sandesh*.

witnessed. The many testimonies create a consistent and coherent impression of extraordinary charisma born of devotion, humility, selflessness, and spiritual attainment.

His impeccable honesty in government work, where bribery was rampant, his hard work and compassionate dealings with those working under him, won Kirpal Singh tremendous respect in the civil service.

Following the passing of his Master, Kirpal Singh retreated to the region of Rishikesh where for five months he meditated over sixteen hours daily.

Knowing that Prem Singh Bhandari was associated with Beas, why would Kirpal Singh write this letter? Could he not perceive the potential consequences? In 1968, a tract named Truth Triumphant was privately published by several initiates of Baba Sawan Singh affiliated with Ruhani Satsang, to address some of the drastic polemic penned by Daryai Lal Kapur. In it the writers assert that the information put forward in the letter, that Charan Singh was attempting to abdicate from the guruship at Beas, had been “leaked out from Dera” but that the sources “were unwilling to own it openly.” This leads us to a question; what if the letter’s contents were true?



**Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji** initiating children outside a village in the Himalayn foothills.

## CHARAN SINGH AND SUCCESSION

Is there evidence to support the contention that Charan Singh was so very anxious to be free of the burden of his new position that he would resort to the measures alleged in the letter? In this regard posterity has provided amply in the form of literature published by Beas in the last fifteen years. In 1990 several months prior to Charan Singh's death, a book titled *Treasure Beyond Measure* was published under his supervision, drawing heavily on his personal diaries and letters. The chapters which pertain to the events of his succession offer a compelling, even poignant account of a man who had been caught in a terrible and unwanted trap.

In the first instance, it becomes very clear that Charan Singh had no idea in the lifetime of S.B. Jagat Singh, that he would be selected as his successor. He realized his position only after arriving at Dera Beas during the cremation of his predecessor, October 23, 1951, when various individuals began to approach him and bow at his feet. Soon he was directly informed that he had been named Jagat Singh's successor in his last will. The shock all but tore him apart.

His feelings were recorded in a personal diary: "I hardly knew what to do. I never felt so bad and so ashamed as I felt then. I was feeling as if I had committed some heinous crime of my life and I had been punished with the sentence of death and people have just surrounded me to see my execution. It was terrible for me to spend three hours there. Destiny could hardly play a worse joke than this. I knew I was not what I was taken to be and yet, I could not find any way out of this (my emphasis)."<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, when the will was actually read to him and he was certain of his nomination as the next Master, "he refused point blank."<sup>58</sup>

That night he attempted to escape the Dera unnoticed, but was stopped by several watchful devotees. Soon after he was taken to the family farm at Sirsa, where a profound inner struggle ensued. From a personal letter:

"..I have been declared dead minus existence. Destiny has played the biggest joke with me....I have been surrounded, captured, and imprisoned....I am at war within myself and can hardly decide anything."<sup>59</sup>

Six days later he seems reconciled to the situation, revealing his reasoning in a personal letter dated October 30:

"The news took me as the greatest surprise of my life and nature perhaps could not give me worse shock than this. As for not accepting this, there is nothing in my hand now to accept or reject it; my rejection will not make any difference for the satsangis and I would be haunted anywhere I go. I cannot go underground even--as after I come back the position will be the same."<sup>60</sup>



**Maharaj Charan Singh** at the ceremony marking his ascension as guru at Beas, November 4, 1951.

<sup>57</sup> *Treasure Beyond Measure*. Shanti Sethi, R.S.Satsang Beas, 1990, p. 11

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 124

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 18

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 19

The crisis resolved, Charan Singh was installed in a ceremony held November 4, 1951. In his acceptance speech he referred to his anguished indecision and apologized for his absence from the Dera. He then said, "I wish to tell the sangat quite frankly that I do not make any claims whatsoever to spiritual attainments." He reiterates that the order for his succession was communicated to him after S.B. Jagat Singh's demise. He ends his speech with a startling comment, "...I have submitted myself to the sangat, and the sangat can do as they see fit."<sup>61</sup> This follows directly from his conclusions described in the letter of October 30 that he could not escape the sangat. In one letter Charan Singh remarks, "Anyhow, My 'execution' took place on November 4th."<sup>62</sup>

Taken together these various statements are disarmingly honest. Charan Singh, at the beginning of his ministry, is not merely under emphasizing his inner attainment, or showing exceptional modesty about it, rather it would appear that he is privately and publically stating that he doesn't have it.

Having glimpsed Charan Singh's thoughts as expressed in diaries and letters, his disclaimer at the time of his installation seems clear and straightforward. Yet no one among the students of the Radhasoami tradition seem prepared to take Charan Singh's powerful statements simply as candid expressions of his actual position and then consider the implications.

How did Charan Singh eventually reconcile himself to his situation after Jagat Singh's passing. This is based less on the orders of his predecessor, but as described in his letter of October 30, 1951, quoted above, more by the fact that he cannot escape the sangat. He emphasizes the passivity of his position when he states during his acceptance speech, "I feel like a stone idol in a temple. According to their notions of love, some bathe it with cold water, some with hot water, and some deck it in fine clothes; but still it is an idol all the same."<sup>63</sup> In the closing words of his speech he carries this point further, casting the final responsibility for his enthronement on the sangat and with an edge of helplessness, saying that they may "do as they see fit." However, this turns Sant Mat teachings on its head, for it is not the sangat that makes the guru, but the guru that makes the sangat. In emphasizing the responsibility of the sangat, Charan Singh is clearly positioning himself as guru by designation, as guru by circumstance, as the new leader of a community, but not as a guru by virtue of spiritual authenticity (which he specifically disavows), however much this may be implied by his office.

Charan Singh's reaction to his succession is given further context by a number of statements he has made about his background. Charan Singh has stated that he was unfamiliar with details of Sant Mat theory even into the early period of his guruship. Daryai Lal Kapur tells us that Charan Singh on various occasions would say, "Up till the time I was forced (my emphasis) to assume the Mastership, I never read a single Sant Mat book. For me, Huzur Maharaj Ji himself was Sant Mat."<sup>64</sup> Although referring to his succession as "forced" suggests again that Charan Singh maintained a somewhat bitter view of his position, it is also notable that up until age 35, after he assumed the gaddi, Charan Singh had not read

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<sup>61</sup> *Heaven on Earth*. Daryai Lal Kapur, RS Satsang Beas, 1986, p. 307

<sup>62</sup> *Treasure Beyond Measure*. Ibid. p. 24

<sup>63</sup> Quoted from *The Sociology of Enlightenment*. David Christopher Lane, Del Mar Press, (no date) p. 38

<sup>64</sup> *Heaven on Earth*. Ibid. p. 290

Gurmat Sidhant, Sar Bachan, Path of the Masters, or any other of the basic literature of the Path.

One might presume that he would have had little need for literature, as he would have inculcated Sant Mat teachings through attendance at satsang from his early youth, as well as through his close association with Baba Sawan Singh. However, this apparently is not the case. Explaining why he did not conduct satsang for a number of months after becoming the Beas Guru, Charan Singh admits: "...I knew nothing about Sant Mat teachings. I never attentively heard Sardar Bahadur Ji's or Great Master's satsangs, though I used to enjoy them. I never even noticed which shabd (scripture) was taken. I only knew one thing--how to be steadfast on the three principles and how to meditate."<sup>65</sup>

The fact that he was unable to conduct satsang due to a scant knowledge of Sant Mat led eventually to a number of books being presented for his study by Babu Gulab Singh along with tutoring sessions. "Ultimately, I started understanding from him the various aspects of the teachings. Meanwhile, Prof. Jagmohan Lal gave me a copy of *The Path of the Masters* to read.... It also helped me to understand the philosophy of Sant Mat."<sup>66</sup>

We are here left to conclude that Sant Mat is a philosophy learned from books, rather than one born of spiritual realization. However, we should not be surprised by this inference. Though he was initiated in his late teens and therefore "knew.. how to meditate" as he mentioned above, it seems that Charan Singh showed little disposition towards meditation practice, the means through which spiritual realization occurs.

When asked about whether he meditated in his college days, Charan Singh replies, "Let me tell you in confidence: I did it only casually, except for 60 days when I did it regularly. In 1936, when I was studying in intermediate, I was engaged but did not want to marry the girl I was engaged to. I went to Bibi Ralli and requested her to convey to the Great Master that I did not want to marry." His request was ignored despite many entreaties on his behalf. However, "In 1941, when I was in Law College, Bibi Ralli again pleaded for me very strongly. The Master said, "Well, I will break the engagement if he sits regularly in bhajan (meditation) for one hour for sixty days."<sup>67</sup> Although the usual prescription of the Sant Mat gurus was for their disciples to meditate a minimum of two and one half hours daily, in this anecdote we learn that Baba Sawan Singh induced Charan Singh to meditate one hour a day by offering him the achievement of a worldly goal.

As an intelligent and dutiful oldest grandson, Charan Singh may have been happy to participate in the religious and social life of his family and to serve his illustrious grandfather, but there is nothing in his biography to suggest a passion for the inner life. Had this been the case one could reasonably expect that he would show some interest in the literature, and if not this, perhaps in the satsangs, and if not these, at least the inner practices. However, it is plain that none of these held much interest for him prior to his ascension to the guruship at Beas.

Did Charan Singh then attain the perfect spiritual realization described by the Sant Mat tradition at some time during the early period of his guruship? In a talk with Western disciples in the late 1970's, Charan Singh, called Maharaji by his disciples, offered further candid insight:

"Question: Maharaji, someone asked me if you have ever battled with meditation.

Charan Singh: I battle every day."

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<sup>65</sup> *Treasure Beyond Measure*. Shanti Sethi, Second Edition, enlarged. RS Satsang Beas, 1991, p. 225

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p. 226

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 222

.....A discussion on other topics then ensues in which Charan Singh mentions that at night he is locked into his room from outside, and three outer rooms are also locked, so that he is entirely locked in the house, unable to get out until someone opens the four locks each morning at about eight. The conversation then drifted back to his unsettling response to the previous question.

“Question: And you still battle with meditation?”

Charan Singh: The whole night is spent in battling. With four locks, how can you do otherwise? You cannot open four locks; so whether with sleep or with meditation, you have to battle with yourself.”<sup>68</sup>

Leaving aside the curious matter of why he was locked in his room every night, this is an astonishing statement that seems to contradict the most basic notions of spiritual mastery in Sant Mat or any other mystic traditions. Peace and control of the mind are essential attributes of advanced spiritual realization. If one is battling with oneself, not having attained perfect concentration, then one is yet on the way. A Master may meditate in the common sense of sitting with closed eyes, but it would have no trace of the struggling process the average disciple experiences, a struggle plainly revealed here. Nor would the Master know sleep in the usual definition as fits of unconsciousness punctuated by dreams. The battles of sleep and meditation are considered basic to the disciplic phase. In the highest states of God realization who is left to struggle, who is left to dream?

“When I was, God was not;  
Now that God is,  
I am no more.  
The dark shadows  
of I-ness vanished  
When I came  
Face to face with the lamp.”<sup>69</sup>

“Only the One remains,  
The other has vanished-  
the wave has merged in the Sea.”<sup>70</sup>

If the “Master” is still battling with himself, what shall be the fate of the poor disciple.

“Says Kabir: I'll sleep no more,  
For God, the precious jewel,  
I have found within my own body.”<sup>71</sup>

Although it is difficult to ascertain the full context, content, and source of the letter attributed to Kirpal Singh; yet, in the light of our discussion, the letter's allegation of an early attempt by Charan Singh to arrange his abdication is one more piece of a consistent pattern. So then if the letters contents were true, what was to be gained by Kirpal Singh writing to Bhandari with this information? If Kirpal Singh was the author of the letter, was he attempting to win over this one individual through allegations that must have seemed rather strong out of the context that posterity now provides us? If Charan Singh had abdicated

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<sup>68</sup> *Spiritual Heritage*. Charan Singh, RS Satsang Beas, 1983, pp.120-123

<sup>69</sup> *Kabir: The Weaver of God's Name*. V.K.Sethi, RS Satsang Beas, 1984, p.731

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 731

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* p. 379

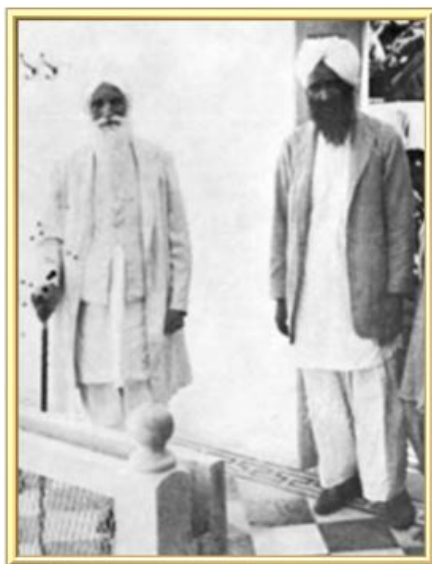
Kirpal Singh's own position would have been strengthened, as the integrity of the Beas gaddi would be in doubt in the minds of many. Yet the very act of writing the letter, and particularly its circulation back to Beas, would seem likely to put a stop to the plan it exposes from ever being carried out.

If Kirpal Singh did, in fact, write the letter, another intriguing possibility is that Kirpal Singh could perceive the consequences of writing to Bhandari, someone obviously well known to him; that it was not a matter of defamatory gossip as alleged by Beas, but rather a deliberate intervention to prevent Charan Singh from abdicating.

Ironically, no one would have known of the letter and Charan Singh's plan to abdicate, had Beas, eager to utilize it as a tool of propaganda against Kirpal Singh, not made it public themselves by publishing the apology. Nevertheless, If slander occurred in this affair, was it in the letter's contents, which may well have been true, or the apology's publication by Beas, in contravention of an agreement with Kirpal Singh?

The position of Guru lasts "until death takes pity on you,"<sup>72</sup> wrote Charan Singh, after many years as leader of Radhasoami Satsang Beas. If Charan Singh had attempted a shortcut by abdicating from the gaddi in his own lifetime, it would have created a severe crisis that would certainly have undermined the integrity of the guruship. Some disheartened Beas followers might have migrated toward Kirpal Singh, however, the majority would likely have followed whoever was put up in his place. Others would simply have lost faith.

The letter may well have prevented Charan Singh's premature abdication, which would have brought dishonor to himself as well as to the spiritual mission of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh. Whether Kirpal Singh wrote the letter or not, in giving out the apology demanded, it is more likely that Kirpal Singh, taking the broad view, acted to protect the honor of the gaddi of his Master and of his Master's family. If so, we must consider the fact that his own honor was being offered in exchange.



**Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji** with Kirpal Singh then called "Bhapa ji" – probably late thirties.

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<sup>72</sup> *Treasure Beyond Measure*. Ibid. p.181 From a letter of November 4th, 1977

## ON THE TRANSMISSION OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

An aspect of Charan Singh's succession that is of great significance but has received little or no discussion is the fact that he was entirely uninformed of his destined role prior to Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singh's passing. This has now taken on something of the character of a tradition with his own succession by Gurinder Singh, who was similarly uninformed.<sup>73</sup> In both these instances a legal document was the sole vehicle of succession. In other words, there is not even a suggestion of prior verbal authorization or spiritual transmission from the living guru to the successor.

It must be emphasized that it is apparent from Charan Singh's account that not only was he uninformed by Jagat Singh, but he also had received no inward, spiritual forewarning. This has important implications for our understanding of Sant Mat and succession, particularly as framed through this specific lineage.

Is it assumed by Beas that some successors can travel all or most of their inner spiritual journey after their succession? Is it possible to be God-realized and unaware of one's destiny? Would the truth be veiled from one who is supposed to be, or soon become, an incarnation of truth? What advantage would fall to Jagat Singh or later Charan Singh in leaving the scene without at least conveying their intentions regarding succession to the individual concerned? There could be no question of a gurmukh refusing his guru's order. On the other hand, it would certainly be rather awkward for the previous guru to justify his designation to his successor who has little, if any, spiritual advancement.

Let us recall that first-hand spiritual experience under the direct, unmediated guidance of an advanced and hopefully fully realized living adept is the very essence of Sant Mat discipleship, if not mysticism generally. A succession based entirely on a will is at odds with this in a similar way to religious doctrines based entirely on the scriptural records of spiritual adepts of the past; both are divorced from their living roots in the living Master. Documents can be forged or falsified. They are inherently tainted by the uncertainty of second-hand evidence. If the successor has not had verbal instructions and advanced spiritual experience during the lifetime of his guru, if his entire authority is derived from a document, how then does such a succession accord with the mysticism of Sant Mat?

Let us review Kirpal Singh's position with regard to the transmission of spiritual authority. Kirpal Singh affirms that there is a verbal command from the departing guru, often well in advance of his passing. There is some evidence for this in recent Sant Mat history. According to biographies, Baba Jaimal Singh received his commission several years before Soami Ji's passing. Kirpal Singh states that his own verbal authorization was given almost six months prior to Baba Sawan Singh's passing.

Even more significant is Kirpal Singh's unique assertion that the complete power to function as the living Master is passed in each generation from the eyes of the Guru, to the eyes of the chosen disciple, the perfect receptacle. This is a logical extension of the tremendous importance accorded in Sant Mat to darshan, particularly defined as the eyes to eyes meeting with the Guru. In several accounts it is said that Tulsi Saheb did not "depart this world until Swami Ji had arrived and been blessed with a last penetrating look." (See footnote 15)

Kirpal Singh was adamant that succession was not passed through documents. "[The mastership is not passed on] through papers or through legal documents; It is through the

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<sup>73</sup> A description of Maharaj Charan Singh's last days, the writing of his will, and Gurinder Singh's inaugural address, with striking similarities to Charan Singh's own, were distributed in a memo released by the Dera secretary on July 20, 1990. Also found in the second edition of *Treasure Beyond Measure*. pp. 284-293



eyes, through the attention.”<sup>74</sup> This was sometimes interpreted somewhat simplistically to mean that a guru would not use documentation to name his successor. However, in the light of Beas succession patterns, it would make better sense to interpret Kirpal Singh’s words as a literal assertion that the actual transmission of spiritual authority is not achieved through documents. This does not mean that succession could not be affirmed by a will. In the case of a will it is merely a confirmation by the Master for the sangat’s benefit so there is no confusion.

The difference between these interpretations is more than academic, as evidenced by the great controversy after Kirpal Singh’s passing, when Darshan Singh cited, among other things, a will in which he was named as the spiritual successor. This was taken by some Kirpal Singh initiates, particularly outside India, as sure evidence that Darshan Singh was not his successor. However, detailed testimony by R.K. Khanna and B.S. Gyani supports the contention that Kirpal Singh did, in fact, have a will written stating that Darshan Singh was his spiritual successor. Both have left documented accounts regarding the will, its preparation in 1971 by Radha Krishna Khanna on the instructions of Kirpal Singh, and its conveyance back to Sawan Ashram by Gyani Ji, who read it during his return to Sawan Ashram. Gyani Bhagwan Singh retold the story in detail to Arran Stephens and myself during our interview with him at Sawan Ashram in 1988. The will itself has a strange history and never played a significant role in Darshan Singh's succession. The original was apparently lost and a purported second draft did not come to light until the early eighties, well into Darshan Singh’s ministry.

One has the impression that its creation was a half-hearted effort on the part of Kirpal Singh, very likely written to satisfy Radha Krishna Khanna and perhaps others who were concerned by Kirpal Singh's advancing age, and were insisting on the need for documenting his wishes regarding succession. There was little attention given to its careful preservation and future conveyance to the sangat. Furthermore, in the last months of his life, Kirpal Singh referred to his succession more or less cryptically, never mentioning his will. During a talk with western visitors exactly one week before his passing, Kirpal Singh stated, “When your friend comes today in a white suit, tomorrow in yellow clothes, third day in brown clothes, would you not recognize Him? I hope you recognize and do not discard Him [chuckles]. That's all I can say...”<sup>75</sup> This is another instance of intentional ambiguity which led to a tremendous crisis in the sangat but important opportunities for renewal of the organization.

When Darshan Singh himself was preparing to leave the body he explained to several of his staff members that although the transference of spiritual power takes place through the eyes, he was going to write a will only as a confirmation to the sangat, as he wished for a smooth transition. In the case of Darshan Singh every precaution was made to insure that the will's authenticity would be unimpeachable and that its wording was unambiguous.

Between the two lineages -- that of Jagat Singh and Charan Singh, and that of Kirpal Singh -- we can now see that there are markedly differing views on the transmission of spiritual authority. On the Beas side, documentary evidence of the previous guru's wishes is considered a completely sufficient vehicle through which the successor may both learn of and derive his authority.

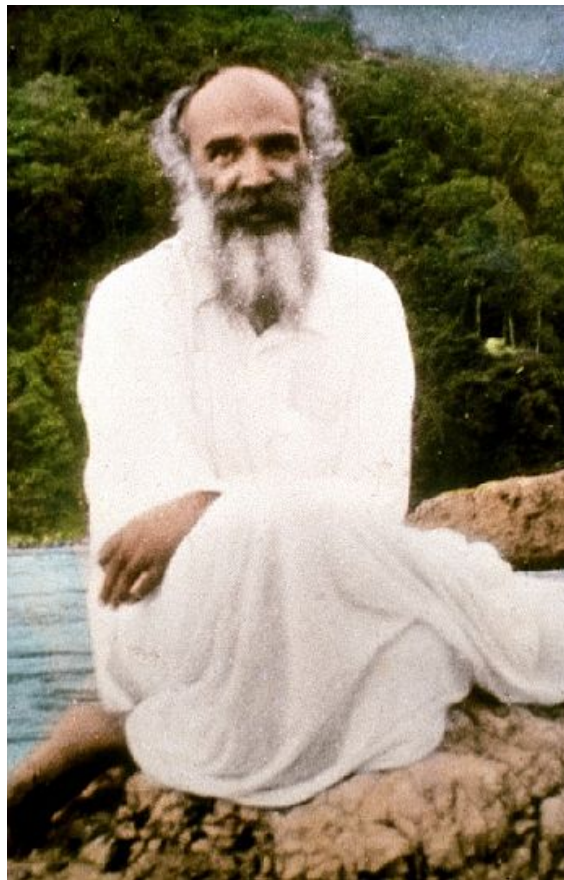
In the view of Kirpal Singh, succession is based on the human and spiritual attainments of the gurumukh disciple, consummated by a transference of spiritual empowerment through the eyes. The succession is affirmed on the physical plane by verbal orders from the living

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<sup>74</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. June 1976, p. 8

<sup>75</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. Oct. 1975, p. 27

guru. On the other hand, the current Beas view of succession taking place without the successor having any prior knowledge or verbal instructions or transmission of spiritual power, would seem to stand in contradiction to what we do understand as central aspects of the Sant Mat tradition generally: specifically, direct inner spiritual experience confirmed verbally on the human plane by the Living Master.



**Sant Kirpal Singh** in the vicinity of Rishikesh 1948.

# INNOVATION IN THE MINISTRY OF KIRPAL SINGH

## Inner Experience at Initiation

“What the mystery of life is - what is a man, what is a soul - was solved in little or no time.”

- Kirpal Singh speaking of his initiation (January 24, 1964, Washington, D.C.).

Kirpal Singh's emphasis on experience at initiation was unique in the Radhasoami tradition, a fact that he himself acknowledged. However, as we will see, experience at initiation has been fairly common throughout modern Sant Mat history, including the time of Baba Sawan Singh. I will also argue that this was an innovation consistent with the larger context and intention of Kirpal Singh's ministry.

Certainly, Baba Sawan Singh understood the need for a modern presentation of Sant Mat in the West. In a 1937 letter to an American disciple he wrote;

“... the foundation must be laid in America for a very Great Work. That country is to make great advances in spiritual things, leading the whole world of Western civilization....Large numbers there are simply waiting for the matter to be properly presented to them (my emphasis). The inner preparation has been made.”<sup>76</sup>

The nature of this presentation was to be closely tied to the structure of the modern mind, along lines advanced by Baba Sawan Singh during his own ministry. This was to emphasize the practical and scientific utility of Surat Shabd Yoga in a secular age, where everyone was in a hurry for results and everyone demanded proof. Kirpal Singh's emphasis on experience at the time of initiation was an innovation consistent with this intention.

Mark Juergensmeyer in his book, *Radhasoami Reality*, describes “People in the modern age,” stating that, “..they seek objective verification of things that they regard as true.”<sup>77</sup>

Kirpal Singh's sensitivity to these points was intimated in his earliest work as guru, *A Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj*. He writes of his initial concept for *Ruhani Satsang*, which he states he presented to his Master in the months following his verbal designation as spiritual successor in October 1947:

“The sole objective of this satsang is to present spirituality to mankind in general in a lucid scientific form.”

This was a clear response to the social context of India in this century, where the Indian intelligentsia and Western society as a whole had generally rejected mysticism and religion. Science was the new philosophic authority, superseding religion. Sant Mat, if it was to have appeal in the modern world, needed to adopt some of its language. Along with this, as pointed out by Juergensmeyer, the modern mind demanded proof.

The way marked by Baba Sawan Singh and developed by Kirpal Singh was to emphasize individual mystical experience as a natural evolution beyond the fading appeal of traditional religion. This was described as a spiritual experiment where the laboratory is the body itself. This experiment is based not on faith, but on proper guidance and correct application of the meditation technique. Relating this to scientific method has been the foundation of Sant Mat's modern presentation. One reason that this approach has proven fairly successful is

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<sup>76</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. July 1976, pp. 6-7 Between August 1974 to December 1976 *Sat Sandesh* was not authorized by Sant Kirpal Singh. During that time, Russell Perkins published the magazine under his own auspices and later as a representative for Ajaib Singh. Russell Perkins then stopped publishing *Sat Sandesh* to concentrate on Ajaib Singh's movement magazine, *Sant Bani*. Soon after, *Sat Sandesh* resumed publication under the auspices of Darshan Singh's organization.

<sup>77</sup> *Radhasoami Reality: The Logic of a Modern Faith*. Mark Juergensmeyer, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1991

that the discriminating, proof-seeking intellect of the modern mind is reasonably harmonious with Sant Mat, where the need for direct self-experience is stressed and where sectarianism is eschewed.

Kirpal Singh's abandonment of the term "Radhasoami" as a ritual greeting was a step towards minimizing the sectarian elements that still remained at Beas, in order that the teaching would be more accessible to a general audience. The presentation of spirituality as a process that offered definite results differentiated his ministry from other similar movements, including Radhasoami Beas. The emphasis on inner experience at initiation had broad appeal.

"A qualification of a Master is given as one who can give you some experience to start with...who can appear and can remove the dark veil by giving a sitting; and you can testify that it is so."<sup>78</sup>

It is taken for granted in Sant Mat that the Master has the competence to raise any soul to have some type of spiritual experience, but it is currently believed at Beas that he would only actually do so when the soul was truly fit. On the other hand, Kirpal Singh taught that everyone could have a firsthand experience at initiation and develop further on this definite basis for faith in the method. For this to happen, the competency to give the experience must be there.

Aside from its value as firsthand evidence of inner spiritual vision, experience at initiation served as a criterion to test whether the claims by a given Master were valid or not. In referring to other gurus, Kirpal Singh commented:

"...he's got a very good face, very good turban. He is a very gentle man, very elegant, he's a very good actor. But what he is, that can be tested only by initiation...Don't go by propaganda."<sup>79</sup>

Often both these aspects, satisfying the modern intellect and providing a yardstick with which to differentiate competing claims, would find their way into the same discussion:

"So the present times have changed and those who have an inkling, a desire are put on the way. They are given some experience, with the grace of God, to start with. Otherwise people are not going to believe you.

"People have been coming to me who have been initiated somewhere. They had been putting in meditation time of two, three, or four hours daily. With all that, they got nothing, and they left it. If you get something to start with you can develop. So the present time has changed: the work of man-making is started side by side with the giving of the experience on the very first day. And when you see the experience--have the experience yourself--then I think you have something to stand on."<sup>80</sup>

To drive home the vital reality of the inner experience people had both at initiation as well as after general group meditation sittings, it was his usual practice to describe in turn, a series of visionary phenomenon regarded as common preliminary experiences. The series of visions generally were: flashes of light, lights of various colors, blue sky, stars, big star, sun, moon, golden light, Master's form, and the Master's form speaking to the individual within. He would then count how many had seen each, making notes of the results. Everyone present could then see, through the raising of hands, that most everyone had indeed had some inner experience. If someone claimed to have no experience they were usually given a

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<sup>78</sup> *Sat Sandesh*. July 1975, p. 8 (from a talk given on January 24, 1964 Washington, D.C.)

<sup>79</sup> *Heart to Heart Talks*. Vol.1. p. 43

<sup>80</sup> Audiotape, January 23, 1964. Washinton, D.C. Kirpal Singh's reference to man-making and experience starting simultaneously is a reference to the change from the ancient practice of giving initiation (and the inner experience that was associated with initiation) only after years of perfecting the character.

second meditation sitting. After initiations conducted by Kirpal Singh or his representatives, the new initiate filled out a form in which they recorded their meditation experience.

“People don't believe there is anything inside...a Master gives you something to prove that there is something.”<sup>81</sup> This was the purpose of his public accounting of meditation experiences.

A solid majority of individuals at initiation did report some kind of inner experience. Some had already had experiences of seeing the Master within or light within prior to initiation, while waiting for initiation, or after meeting the Master, reading a book by him, or through some initial contact with him. In some cases, due to nervousness effecting concentration during meditation, the individual had an experience later on the day of initiation or the next day. I have seen numerous instances of all of these. Following public meditation sittings, which included many non-initiates, it was Kirpal Singh's usual practice to ask about the experience of the participants just as if it were an initiation. He stated that even non-initiates attending such sittings should have some spiritual experience: “...even those who were never given initiation--all received something.”<sup>82</sup> This quote referred to the spiritual experiences reported by seekers who attended his meditation sittings.

The concept of a direct spiritual experience at the time of initiation is common to many esoteric spiritual traditions. In the Mystery schools initiation was far more than the mere learning of a technique. It was meant to demonstrate practically the principles that had previously been learned in theory only. In the ancient initiation practices of India and the Occident a great deal of time was spent on the preparation of the aspirant, so that the seed of initiation would fall on fertile ground.

In one talk Kirpal Singh said, “I will tell you what the old Egyptians used to do. They gave initiation...they did not give the experience..They just told them to remain quiet for two long years...and naturally the way opened up....Now the door is opened the very first day.”<sup>83</sup> Lucius Apuleus in his fourth century description of his initiation experience into the Roman mystery school of Isis, after long preparation, offers a classic testimony of spiritual transcendence: “At midnight I saw the sun shining as if it were noon.”<sup>84</sup>

Repeatedly, when referring to the issue of experience at initiation, Kirpal Singh cites the age in which we live. “Hitherto, men were carefully prepared for initiation. Those who came to the Master had to live with him for months. When they were ready only then Master gave something to them. Now the times have changed. So something is given all at once at the start. All get something, some more, some less, that's another thing, but they do get it. It's a special gift of God.”<sup>85</sup>

Spiritual experience at the time of initiation, though not known to have been emphasised in the Sant Mat tradition before Kirpal Singh, was also much more common than is usually appreciated.

The Anurag Sagar of Kabir offers a poetic description of the first initiation given in the earliest ages of humanity. This also takes the form of an experience of the “Indestructible Sound” and the “Indestructible Light” manifested to the new initiate.

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<sup>81</sup> *Heart to Heart Talks*. Vol.2. p. 37

<sup>82</sup> *Heart to Heart Talks*. Vol.1. p. 2

<sup>83</sup> From a talk given January 23, 1964 in Washington, D.C.

<sup>84</sup> *The Golden Ass*. Lucius Apuleus, Penguin Books, 1990, Translated by Robert Graves, Revised by Michael Grant, p. 194

<sup>85</sup> *Heart to Heart Talks*. Vol.1. p. 40

Soami Ji, according to Chacha Pratap Singh, his brother and biographer, apparently conferred experience at initiation on occasion:

“Soamiji Maharaj often used to raise the spirit of certain Adhikaris (fit and deserving) at the time of initiation. Thus they had a fore-taste of the bliss of higher regions, and got faith instantly (my emphasis).”<sup>86</sup>

The latter statement, that as a result of their initiation experience they developed faith immediately, was a critical facet in Kirpal Singh’s new presentation of the teachings. Faith was to be grounded in personal esoteric experience, beginning at the very time of initiation.

According to several accounts, Baba Jaimal Singh’s own initiation at the age of seventeen resulted in an inner ascent from which he did not emerge for several days, and then only with Soami Ji’s direct intervention.<sup>87</sup>

Darshan Singh in an oft repeated account of his initiation at age five tells how Baba Sawan Singh made him sit in front of him and close his eyes. Baba Sawan Singh then asked him what he saw inside to which he replied that he saw a field of stars. Hazur then said, “That is sufficient for the time being. You can have the rest later.”<sup>88</sup>

Trilochan Singh Khanna, Kirpal Singh’s first representative outside India, in an autobiographical account, writes about his initiation:

“In 1928, at Amritsar while studying in the eighth grade, I received my most precious gift--the gift of initiation by the Supreme Master Baba Sawan Singh Ji. The firsthand experience of seeing the tremendous Light and hearing the Sound of bells as my soul was lifted above body consciousness on the eternal current of holy Naam made me aware of my spiritual birth into life everlasting.”

Kirpal Singh describes his own initiation in the following account:

“The next time there was initiation--this was in early February-- and all were sitting in initiation, Master said, ‘You sit inside.’ He gave initiation there; I was inside sitting in his room. This is how I was initiated! I was waiting for him; perhaps he will call me--or what? I couldn’t dare move, because he did not call me. I was sitting inside. Then he returned. I asked him, ‘Will you kindly initiate me?’ ‘Oh, yes, surely.’ What the mystery of life is--what is a man, what is a soul-- was solved in little or no time.”<sup>89</sup>

The book, *Call of The Great Master* by Daryai Lal Kapur transcribes a number of conversations between various visitors to Beas and Baba Sawan Singh. In one conversation with a missionary, Kapur reports the following exchange:

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<sup>86</sup> *The Biography of Soami Ji Maharaj*. Lala Pratap Singh Seth, RS Satsang Soami Bagh Agra, First English edition, 1968 (original 1902), p. 36 paragraph 31

<sup>87</sup> *Heaven on Earth*. Ibid. p. 14

and also *A Great Saint Baba Jaimal Singh*. Ibid. p. 40

<sup>88</sup> *Love Has Only A Beginning: Autobiography of Darshan Singh*. SK Publications, Delhi, 1996, p. 3.

Many years ago, while travelling on a city bus in Vancouver, I met an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh whom I knew casually from the local satsang. He told me the story of his initiation. He was a student of Jagmohan Lal, a professor and close disciple of Hazur. Jagmohan Lal took him to a tent where Hazur was staying during a tour. He asked Hazur to initiate the teenager. Hazur gave him the first two of the Five Holy Names and told him to close his eyes, he then put his thumb on his forehead and asked him what he saw inside. Hazur instructed him not to forget him. Several years later the young man migrated to Canada and forgot all about the path until the late sixties after a serious accident in which he almost died. While in hospital Hazur appeared to him and told him, “I told you not to forget me.” He was initiated into the last three names by Kirpal Singh in Vancouver in 1972. The old man explained to me, “He gave me the last three names, put his thumb on my forehead just as Hazur had done, and asked me what I saw inside.” Then he exclaimed with great enthusiasm, “And I got the real Naam!”

<sup>89</sup> From audiotape January 24, 1964 in Washington, D.C.

“‘Sir, the Gospel says that when Jesus was baptized, the Spirit of God descended on His head like a dove,’ the American lady said.

‘We have the Gospel here,’ said the Master. ‘Let us see what the actual words are.’

The missionary then read the following verse (Matthew 3:16) from the Bible:

‘And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of water: and, lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.’

.....’Now listen attentively,’ said the Master. ‘Every word of this verse relates to Jesus’ inner experiences at the time of his Initiation.’”<sup>90</sup>

In the same book, Daryai Lal Kapur describes his own initiation on December 30, 1910:

“It was during the Initiation that I had my first experience.” He then talks about being taught the Five Names but not being put into meditation. “When the Great Master returned after an hour and taught us how to connect our soul with the Sound Current, all my companions heard the Celestial Music within, but I could find no trace of it.

When this fact was brought to the notice of the Master, He asked me to come forward and made me sit in the proper posture for meditation in front of Him. Touching the center of my forehead with the pointing finger of His right hand he said, ‘Don’t you hear any sound here?’ With the touch of His finger it seemed as if the reservoir of ‘Sound’ had burst. Church bells began to ring loudly and clearly. There was an upward pull and the soul current began to withdraw from the body. I do not know how long I sat there. To me it appeared a few minutes. Then I burst out into a sudden spontaneous laugh and unintentionally opened my eyes. The Great Master also laughed and asked, ‘Did you hear the Sound?’ ‘Yes, Sir, by your Grace,’ I replied. ‘Good, your work is done,’ He said. After that for several months the Master was always with me inside and a sweet bell chimed day and night.”<sup>91</sup>

It is notable that all the other people sitting with him reported experience of the inner sound at the time of initiation, and that the very fact that Kapur had not was brought to the notice of the Master, who saw to it that he did. These stories unequivocally indicates that Baba Sawan Singh regarded the initial experience at the time of initiation as important. Giving a second sitting, as Baba Sawan Singh gave Kapur, when no initial experience had been gained, was exactly the method of Kirpal Singh, who also sometimes touched the individual between the eyes.

These several anecdotes indicate that experience at initiation, if not generally emphasized by Baba Sawan Singh, may have had a much greater place in his ministry than has been appreciated. The main difference was that he did not generally have people sit for meditation after they had learned the Five Names given as Simran (mantra). There was a greater emphasis on hearing the inner sound and Baba Sawan Singh did give a sitting for this during the initiation, and as we have seen above, many did hear. It appears from the various accounts we have just read that Kirpal Singh’s approach was not so very far removed from that of his Master.

In a letter of Baba Sawan Singh he says, “The view that one must see something at the time of initiation or he would never be able to see anything later is wrong...Only few see anything at this time. The majority take time, some weeks, some months and some years.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Call of The Great Master*. Daryai Lal Kapur. RS Satsang Beas. 1964. Page 169 - 170

<sup>91</sup> *Call of The Great Master*, Ibid. Page 34 - 35.

<sup>92</sup> *The Radhasoami Tradition*. Ibid. p. 154

This quote from a letter to American disciples seems to suggest a contradiction with Baba Sawan Singh's teachings. Yet in reality, there is no basis for such a conclusion. There is no statement in the entire corpus of Kirpal Singh's written, recorded, or transcribed words where he suggests that if the aspirant has no experience at initiation he cannot see anything later, the basic point of Baba Sawan Singh's statement. Since Baba Sawan Singh did not give a sitting for inner light, it is no surprise that few saw anything at that time, yet clearly many did hear.

It is a matter of record that during the ministry of Sant Kirpal Singh many thousands, both initiated and uninitiated, had the actual experience of the opening of inner vision. At initiations given in India everyone had an experience of light at the first, second, or third sitting and often well over half of those initiated had the vision of the Master's Radiant Form. There are numerous reports of individuals who had an inner vision of Sant Kirpal Singh before knowing of his existence or well prior to their formal initiation (I personally know of a dozen instances of this in my own area). Kirpal Singh stated that initiation is when the Master gives his attention and could occur well before initiation in the formal sense (See Morning Talks).

It appears from the references we have sighted that Kirpal Singh's emphasis on experience at initiation was merely an extension for the modern circumstance of well established method. It is also pertinent to mention that while the core practices have remained essentially the same throughout, it is not uncommon in the history of the Sant Mat teachings for changes in method and approach to occur. For example, it has often been said that in earlier times aspirants had to live with the guru for years before initiation. Even then only one or two of the Five Names were given at the time of initiation. The aspirant had to perfect each rung before being given the next. In the last few centuries, initiation is given after a relatively short period of preparation and all of the Five Names are given at once. It would appear that Sant Mat relies less on tradition and more on thoughtful adaptation to circumstances.

The term "revolution" was used by Kirpal Singh towards the end of his life to describe the work he embodied. He termed it "the spiritual revolution":

"So Springtime is upon us now; there will be more fragrant Saints, I would say now, who will come up and give us, through the grace of God, contact with the God-into-Expression Power. And this is the revolution, the spiritual revolution, which is coming up--an awakening all around...In the past, these things were told in the ears of the disciples after a long time of testing. Now it is given out from open platforms; people are having it without distinction, whether they are ready or not ready, they are getting something. This is what is needed--the times have changed now."<sup>93</sup>

## Human Unity

Another important innovation of Kirpal Singh's was his extensive humanitarian work, which began fairly early in his ministry. Kirpal Singh had been well regarded in Lahore for his community service. Writing about his own guru he said, "He left no stone unturned for reforming and improving the angle of vision of the masses."<sup>94</sup> In the 1956 booklet "Ruhani Satsang," Kirpal Singh wrote, "The Main mission of Ruhani Satsang is to bring all children of

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<sup>93</sup> From a talk given in Florida in 1972. *Sat Sandesh*. March 1973, p.7

<sup>94</sup> *Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji*. Ibid.



God together on one platform so that they may have the right understanding that they are all brothers and sisters in God.” Although various of the Sikh gurus had established relations with religious and political leaders of their time, prior to Kirpal Singh, Sant Mat gurus from Tulsi Saheb forward had rarely moved from their own ashrams to relate to society at large. Subsequently this has become a critical aspect of the ministry of Kirpal Singh and his successors.

In 1957 Kirpal Singh co-founded the World Fellowship of Religions (WFR) and became its first president, a role he continued for three successive terms. The WFR sponsored a number of conferences in which Kirpal Singh was instrumental. During his 1963 tour he met many religious and political leaders including the Pope and the Presidents of several countries. On his return to India he conferred with the Indian Prime Minister Nehru. More WFR conferences followed, as well as talks to a UNESCO conference. In the early 1970's he established Manav Kendra, designed to be a model community including agricultural, educational, and medical components along with the spiritual aspect. In 1974 he convened the first Unity of Man conference featuring many religious and political leaders, including Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India. Kirpal Singh promoted cordial relations between all gurus and spiritual teachers right up to his passing. At the Kumba Mela in April 1974 he convened a Sant Samagam, or gathering of the Indian saints in attendance. He then held a follow-up meeting in July 1974. In early August of that year he addressed the Indian parliament only weeks before his passing.

His efforts towards the re-integration of a spiritual perspective into society at large and warming of relations between various religions was a significant aspect of his mission and wholly unusual for Radhasoami gurus. Kirpal Singh's humanitarian work complemented his spiritual ministry and yet was often quite separate from it. One could say that the ministries of Kirpal Singh, Darshan Singh, and Rajinder Singh, have been two tiered. On the one hand they serve as traditional Gurus of the Surat Shabd Yoga, and on the other as leaders in the search for peace, human unity, and spiritual values.

## **The Self-introspection Diary**

Another innovation that emerged very early in Kirpal Singh's spiritual work was the prescription of a self-introspection diary. Initiates were asked to fill out a chart in which they recorded the number of their ethical lapses in thought, word, and deed on a daily basis under several headings. Along with this they recorded their meditation time, spiritual experiences, and time spent in doing service. Throughout the majority of his guruship, disciples were expected to send their diaries at regular intervals to Kirpal Singh for guidance.

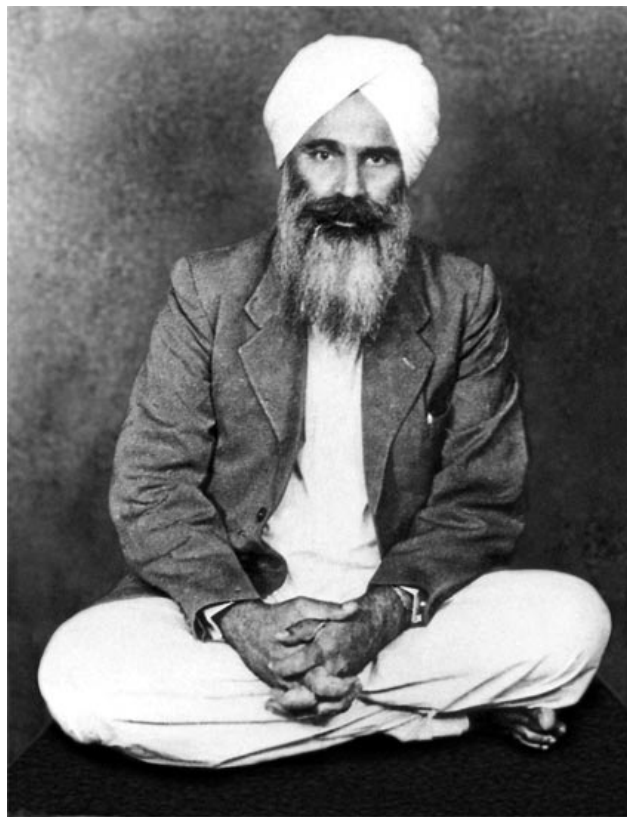
No previous guru in the Radhasoami line had created such a specific tool for self-analysis, though all had laid great emphasis on ethical development as the foundation of spiritual progress. It was his recurrent theme that by correct application of the diary, the initiate would receive a host of benefits ranging from memory improvement to inspiration for self-reformation and greater spiritual efforts. On the subject of the diaries Kirpal Singh wrote:

“If the diaries were to be taken advantage of, you would see a change in your behavior, your mode of thinking, and consequently, you would progress spiritually by leaps and bounds. The purpose of the diary is to reflect your own inner state so that you know where you stand....You should put just as much devotion and attention into keeping your diary as you put into your meditations.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *The Way of the Saints*. Ibid. p. 381. See also *Seven Paths to Perfection* a booklet by Kirpal Singh on the individual components of the diary.

Taken as a whole, the emphasis on inner experience at initiation, his abandonment of the ritualized use of the term Radhasoami, his broad humanitarian activity, and the self-introspection diary, suggest that Kirpal Singh came out early with clear direction for his ministry. It is important to note that had he inherited the mantle at Beas, probably none of these innovations would have been possible. His freedom from the traditions and alliances established at Beas gave him the opportunity to develop his ministry along new lines.



**Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj** early in his spiritual ministry.

## AN ASSESSMENT

There is ample evidence that the full story of politics at Beas in the last decade of Baba Sawan Singh's life remains untold, probably forever. Kirpal Singh speaks in detail of the jealousy of others and severe controversy following his 1938 initiation of 250 persons at Beas on Hazur's behalf. This is a very strong signal that all was not well at Dera, even ten years before the passing of Baba Sawan Singh.

Following the brief tenure at Beas of S.B. Jagat Singh, he is succeeded by a most surprised and reluctant Charan Singh. This succession was achieved in a unique manner, strictly on the basis of legal documentation, no verbal authorization, and not even a hint of spiritual forewarning on the part of the recipient of the mantle. This raises many difficult questions. Furthermore, a critical review of Charan Singh's succession suggested that beneath the mass of organizational hyperbole and the faithful presumption of followers, his own clear statements give ample cause to question the spiritual authenticity of his guruship.

What then was Baba Sawan Singh's plan for Dera at the time of his passing? If we accept both of the major versions of his succession as more or less valid, we see in the last months of Baba Sawan Singh's life, apparently contradictory, even potentially conflicting processes being set in motion by him, for the future development of different aspects of his life work.

Earlier we reviewed Soami Ji's succession at Agra as well as his tolerance of Rai Saligram's alterations of his teachings. Baba Sawan Singh may have been in a position at Dera that required a similar gesture of magnanimity, such as tolerating a Beas succession for the continued stable functioning of the Dera. Knowing that members of his family and managing committee would not accept Kirpal Singh, Hazur had Kirpal Singh do his work as successor from another place and tolerated a situation in which those who wished to do so could continue at the Dera under management led by Jagat Singh. Whether or not there was an actual will, we know that Hazur was made aware of the politics of the Dera's managing committee before he left the body. Hazur, knowing this, could have chosen to intervene one way or the other, by publically naming Jagat Singh or Kirpal Singh, but he did not do so. This is a most notable fact.

Baba Jaimal Singh's succession of Soami Ji has several important similarities to Kirpal Singh's succession of Baba Sawan Singh. There were definite benefits to Baba Jaimal Singh's ministry that resulted from his distance from Soami Ji's Agra sangat. This is very reminiscent of the progressive innovations Kirpal Singh brought to his ministry in Delhi, where he was away from the traditions of the Dera. In both cases the spiritual work was started from scratch, with much smaller numbers, but with much greater freedom. In both cases religious and institutional accretions were stripped away, so that the spiritual kernel of the guruship could flourish. As we discussed much earlier, this spiritual kernel seems to set lightly on material soil. History indicates that Sant Mat gurus have no attachment to place as such, often choosing to cast their tent in more congenial environs when the world and its forms have begun to cling to tightly. It would also appear that in every generation the crisis of succession is the moment of opportunity for any major changes in form and locale. In some cases major changes are made, while in other cases there is no need for major changes and continuity is desirable.

The analogy to Baba Jaimal Singh's succession of Soami Ji was certainly not lost on Baba Sawan Singh. When ordering Kirpal Singh to leave Dera he commented:

“When Baba Ji came from Agra, he brought with him neither money nor followers. He fetched within him only his Guru and through his blessings the present Dera came into existence.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj*. Ibid.

Despite the alleged Beas will, the controversial succession of Baba Sawan Singh could well be regarded as another example of deliberate ambiguity, a device employed by the departing leader to ensure the preservation of the spiritual character of the guruship. The view of Kirpal Singh's succession promulgated by Dera Beas suggests the deviation of a self-interested disciple. However, the evidence upon which this view is based seems deliberately contrived. On the other hand there is a large body of testimony that suggests that Kirpal Singh's succession was a planned and cultivated process in which his grooming by Hazur spanned many years. This can be evidenced from statements made by Hazur at their earliest meetings, as well as through numerous incidents and comments made publically and privately by Hazur throughout Kirpal Singh's discipleship. It is notable that there were disciples of Hazur who actively anticipated, even prepared for Kirpal Singh's succession, as early as fifteen years before the fact (see Appendix A). Just as Soami Ji had done at Agra, it appears that Baba Sawan Singh at his end arranged for the future needs of the Dera, even while preparing his spiritual successor for his intended departure.

As with any death or birth, succession in Sant Mat is a cascade of intense and distressing images. Yet the one that sustains is that of a single man stretched between an absolute experience of spiritual ecstasy and human anguish. In this, the apotheosis, the summit of human purpose, all that it means to be divine and all that it means to be human, touch each other, and then fuse. When such a man emerges he is something other than what he was before, for in essence, he no longer exists. Who then is the Sat Guru?

As Kirpal Singh has written:

“In him shines the very Sun of Spirituality. He is the fountainhead of Life. He is an epitome of the entire creation, visible and invisible, right from Sat Lok down to the physical plane.... He is Truth personified, possessing the very essence of God and fit to be worshiped by all.” (Godman. Kirpal Singh, Sawan Kirpal Publications, pp. 75-76. Originally published by Ruhani Satsang, Delhi, 1967).

## APPENDIX A

### **Kirpal Singh's Move to Delhi: Early Foreshadowing I: Sardar Gurbax Singh Randhir**

There are a number of accounts of Indian disciples of Baba Sawan Singh which offer powerful premonitions of Kirpal Singh's succession. Perhaps the most remarkable is the unpublished account of Pandit Harbans Rai, a disciple of Baba Sawan Singh, and close associate of Sardar Gurbax Singh Randhir, Baba Sawan Singh's satsang leader in Delhi. Harbans Rai details Sardar Gurbax Singh's prophetic faith in Kirpal Singh's eventual succession, many years before the fact, as well as their active efforts on Kirpal Singh's behalf a decade prior to the passing of Hazur. I have included several references to Sardar Gurbax Singh in an attempt to establish the reality of the man who apparently had very early foreknowledge of Kirpal Singh's shift from Beas to Delhi as well as details of his eventual ministry, such as his emphasis on firsthand experience at initiation.

The author, Harbans Rai, was events coordinator at Sawan Ashram for many years. According to his lengthy account, Sardar Gurbax Singh, who was his friend and mentor, took him to Beas in 1935, and introduced him to both Hazur Baba Sawan Singh and Kirpal Singh. Harbans Rai writes;

“He (Sardar Gurbax Singh) explained to me, ‘I have brought you to the complete Master, Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh Ji, and this Kirpal Singh is the Master to come. He will succeed when Hazur Baba Sawan Singh leaves the body.’”

Later, in Delhi, Gurbax Singh further spoke to Harbans Rai about “Gurmukh Kirpal Singh,” stating:

“He will be very strict...but at the same time he will give first hand inner experience when he becomes the Master.’ Then I asked, ‘Then is it better to be initiated by him? Why spend so many years in spiritual practices when I don't get anything? He will give it straight away on the first day.’ My friend replied, ‘So far you do not understand this thing, because at this moment you are quite innocent. You will be convinced by what there is inside at the time when the new Master will come.’ He went on to tell me that there would be much opposition to the new Master and that people would only believe him when he gave them a firsthand inner experience.”

Later in his account, Harbans Rai tells us:

“In 1945, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh came over to Delhi to deliver a number of satsangs. Gurmukh Kirpal Singh also came; at that time Gurbax Singh Ji spoke of him saying, ‘Kirpal Singh has come to take over the duty of satsang now. All right, let us see.’

Meanwhile Sardar Gurbax Singh, as requested by Hazur, had selected the people for initiation; he had told two boys to go out because they were not fit at that moment. But they persisted in sitting there. When Hazur came in he pointed to those two same boys and told them, ‘You get up and go outside. The time for you is not ripe as yet.’ Afterwards Hazur initiated the people. Thereafter he declared that Delhi would become the centre of spirituality for the whole of India, and for the entire world.”

After the passing of Hazur, Sant Kirpal Singh came to Delhi for a time. Then he went up to Rishikesh for meditation in the jungle. After a number of months Sardar Gurbax Singh went up to Rishikesh with some others and requested Sant Kirpal Singh to come to Delhi and hold satsang there.

So the Master came and satsang was started at Daryaganj. At the first satsang held there, Sardar Gurbax Singh stood up and said, ‘The Master of this satsang has come. So from now onwards I resign my authority.’

Sardar Gurbax Singh knew well before his death that he was going to leave this world; this was in the year 1954. He told his family that he was going to the hospital for an operation, he was not sickly...a healthy man, very nice-looking. However, after the operation, either fortunately or unfortunately, his condition became worse. The Master was told of it but he did not appear to pay it any mind, but when I went to him to ask permission to go and visit Gurbax Singh in hospital, the Master said, 'Why go alone? I will also go.' When we reached the hospital we found Sardar Gurbax Singh to be very uncomfortable. The Master asked him how he was feeling, and then asked him what was his inner condition. He replied, 'It is all dark.' The Master then placed his thumb on his forehead, and told him to look inside. 'It is still dark.' 'All right, look with more concentration.' 'Now Hazur has come!' 'Keep looking with full attention.' 'Now Master, you also please come inside,' but the Master said, 'No, who can come with the Master? With an elephant no one can stand.' Then he left."

The following short recollection of Gurbax Singh Randhir comes from an account of Dhani Ram Sharma dated Dec. 1, 1978:

"I was initiated by Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji in the year 1926. I met Master Kirpal in the year 1928, when he was transferred from Rawalpindi to Lahore. It was my good luck that he had a house on rent in the area of Gowalmandi, Lahore, where I was already living. Many times we had a chance to go to satsang and come back together.

Master Kirpal deputed me the duty of cashier of Lahore. From then up to the time of partition in the 1947, I had been working under his guidance. After the demise of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji in the the year 1948, Maharaj Kirpal Singh Ji came over to Delhi for a few days and stayed with Sant Darshan Singh Ji. Thereafter, he left for Rishikesh for meditation there for a few months. Then he again came back to Delhi under the inner instructions of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj as he had to carry on the Satsang work after him. He called the first meeting of the satsangis of the Delhi centre. In those days Sardar Gurbax Singh was in charge of the center. They discussed all the pros and cons to carry on the mission of the Master, and for that they formed a committee. In that meeting Master Kirpal again suggested my name to work as cashier at Delhi, for which I directed to Sardar Gurbax Singh that the cashier should be a person whom the local Satsangis knew well. Sardar Ji said, 'Brother, it is the suggestion of Master Kirpal, so you have to carry on the work.' So I worked on this job continuously for 25 years in Master's time and a few months after him at Sawan Ashram."

## APPENDIX B

### **Kirpal Singh's Move to Delhi: Early Foreshadowing II**

According to Kirpal Singh, he left Beas in accordance with the orders of Hazur. Kirpal Singh's testimony regarding Hazur's words to him are found in A Brief Life Sketch of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj and quoted above, "...What have you to gain from Dera, you better leave Dera. When Baba Ji came from Agra, he brought with him neither money or followers. He brought with him only his Guru and through his blessings the present Dera came into existence." Along with the story of Gurbax Singh Randhir, the experiences of a number of others foreshadows Kirpal Singh's move to Delhi.

Bachan Singh was an initiate of Baba Sawan Singh and a carpenter by profession. In his deeply moving account of his life he mentions the following incident:

"I remember once when I was walking along the street of Sarsa I saw the Master's car travelling toward me. Baba Sawan Singh Ji was sitting inside and I folded my hands, delighted to have his darshan. The car stopped and the Master put out his hand to beckon someone. Although he was looking in my direction, I never imagined that he wanted to speak to me, so I quietly stood there. Again he gestured, and wondering who the person could be I turned round, but there was no one in sight. The realization dawned upon me that the Master was calling myself! - the life just left me and I trembled thinking, 'What have I done now?' The Master was waiting, so somehow I managed to push myself to the car. The Master said, 'Bachan Singh, go to Delhi and settle down there. Do not live in your village any more. I am going to be in Delhi and there will be work for you.'" (Sat Sandesh. July 1973, p. 20) He then tells us that he migrated to Delhi and successfully re-established himself there. He goes on to speak of the sorrow at the passing of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh and his close association with Sant Kirpal Singh soon after he founded Ruhani Satsang in Delhi. He also speaks of the very active opposition to Kirpal Singh's guruship. Bachan Singh was involved in the construction of Sawan Ashram and served as a carpenter there for many years.

In an article on Baba Sawan Singh, Radha Krishna Khanna recalls the following conversation:

"A few days before his physical departure I said to him, 'Master, you have given houses to everybody in the Dera. I would like to purchase a house, too.' Hazur said, 'What have you to do with Dera? Your connection is with me, not with these houses made of bricks. When I go away, you will have nothing to do with this place.' Then he recited this verse, 'When the nightingale flies from the garden, it is immaterial if the owl or the bird of paradise come.' ...And when Hazur did leave that perfect garden, although I was asked to stay on and help with the work, I knew my place was with Sant Kirpal Singh Ji in Delhi." (Sat Sandesh. April 1978, p. 30)

In the unpublished account of Harnam Singh Randhir of Lahore, an early initiate of Hazur who was present on the occasion of Kirpal Singh's first arrival at Dera in 1924, and later associated with him in the civil service, we have the following account:

"When Kirpal Singh retired in 1947 he went to live in the Dera at Beas in the house of his late brother, Sardar Jodh Singh. I also retired that year and went to live in the house next to him. Then we suffered the utmost sorrow at the passing away of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh in 1948. The next day, Kirpal Singh came to us in our house. He told us that Hazur had advised him not to stay in Beas. Both I and my wife had tears in our eyes, but he said, 'Never mind, we shall surely meet again.'"

## APPENDIX C

### A Few Stories from Kirpal Singh's Discipleship

These few stories give some inkling of the influence of Kirpal Singh on those who knew him during the period of his discipleship. There are many similar stories but here is a small sampling:

Manohar Singh Duggal, nephew of Sant Kirpal Singh, has written several accounts of incidents occurring during Baba Sawan Singh's lifetime:

"When Master Kirpal Singh was at Rawalpindi in about 1930, one of his nearest relatives, a boy of fourteen years, was critically ill in hospital. One evening Master went to see him. The mother of this boy respected the Master so much--the family had always regarded him as a Saint--that she begged him that if the child had to die he should make it easy for him because the suffering he was undergoing was too much.

"Master, of course, knew immediately why the boy was suffering and why he could not leave the body. Master said to the mother, 'You'd better call his aunt.' The aunt was called. When she arrived, Master took her aside and said to her, 'You took fifteen rupees from under the boy's pillow; until you return that money the boy cannot die.' She replied, 'Yes, I did take fifteen rupees from under his pillow. Because...'--here she became rather embarrassed--'because I was afraid someone else would steal it.' Master then insisted, 'Until that money is returned he cannot leave.' She put the money back under the pillow, the boy's agony subsided, then he closed his eyes and was gone.

"My father, the elder brother of Kirpal Singh, was very seriously ill at Peshawar in 1939. One night he was on the verge of expiring. I was sitting by his side; I knew the worst was coming, the doctor had given up hope. When the end was near I was just repeating Simran, helpless, just watching what would happen. After a time I suddenly realized that he had started to move--my father's soul had come back into the body. He opened his eyes and I could see they were filled with tears. He called my name, and told me to get a pen and paper as he wanted to write a letter to his younger brother, Kirpal Singh.

"The letter said, 'You know and I know what has happened. Unless you come, I cannot get up from this bed. I request you to come as early as possible.' He then closed his eyes as if in meditation, but after fifteen minutes he opened his eyes and said, 'Send somebody to the railway station at nine o'clock as my other brother will also come.' So actually both brothers arrived; they embraced each other and came straight to see my father. Then my father explained what had happened in the morning: Baba Sawan Singh Ji had come to take him but Kirpal Singh Ji had requested that he be spared. Because of this request Hazur had sent him back. My father's face was shining; he told us, 'I cannot describe what it was like --I cannot describe that place. I was with Baba Sawan Singh Ji and Kirpal Singh Ji. We went and crossed that golden mountain and went to the other side which was full of Light.'

"Due to the long illness of my father the expenditure was very great. My father, although he was so seriously ill, worried very much about the cost. One night during sleep, Kirpal Singh appeared to him and said, 'Brother, why are you nervous? You just look at your coat hanging on the bed and that will look after your needs.' Next morning at five-thirty when I came to my father's room, he said, 'Look, Kirpal Singh has just appeared to me--just check the pockets of the coat lying over there.' When I went through the pockets I was surprised to find they were full of currency notes. This was all his grace and this happened long before he became the Master."

- from Ocean of Grace Divine. Delhi, 1976, pp. 51-52



Iqbal Kaur, wife of Sardar Hukam Singh, an early initiate of Baba Sawan Singh, recounts an incident during the life of Hazur, following the sudden death of her brother from pneumonia:

“I had a second brother who was almost ten years younger. He was deeply attached to the one who was gone and so great was the shock of the death that he was beside himself with grief. One day he disappeared and did not return home. We tried to find him but there was no trace of him at all. We all wondered what had happened and thinking of his grief we were doubly distressed. God had taken back one brother, and now the other had gone off, only the Lord knew where! That night Kirpal Singh Ji came by. It was rather late for a visit--around 11:00 or even after--but then he would call on satsangis in distress without regard to the hour. When he saw us he queried why we looked so distressed, and I explained what had happened. He reassured me and said, ‘Don't worry about Omi. Have faith in Hazur. He will be back home safe at 5:00 in the morning.’

“Sure enough the next morning my younger brother returned at the stipulated time. He had a strange tale to tell. Lost in his sorrow and full of the sense of the meaninglessness of life, he had wandered a long distance. Seeing a railway station, he had boarded a train and in it met a group of sadhus. They asked him where he was going and when he explained that he did not know, they invited him to join them. They got off three or four stations before Hardwar and he accompanied them. They lived in a jungle and when they got there, he realized that they were thugs in disguise. When it was time to sleep, to make sure that he could not get away, they placed him in the middle and spread themselves around him.

“Realizing his danger and feeling completely helpless, Omi could not sleep. It was pitch dark and there was no means of getting away. As he lay restless, he prayed to God for deliverance. In answer to his prayer he saw Light and within it the figure of Maharaj Kirpal Singh. Maharaj Ji commanded him to get up and follow. Full of fear, he said, ‘But how can I? They are all around me and will catch me.’ Maharaj Ji assured him that no one could stop him and he got up and followed him barefoot. They were in a jungle and it was very dark. But Maharaj Ji was radiating Light, and, following that Light, my brother sped along through the jungle. After about two miles, Maharaj Ji informed him that the railway station was a few yards ahead and asked him to catch the first train from there, and left him. He proceeded as commanded and got off three station ahead to change for Lahore.

“At this railway station he once again met Maharaj Ji and Maharaj Ji asked him how he had managed to join those sadhus. The boy explained his state of grief and how he had fallen into their company. ‘They were dangerous thugs--and what if they had done you to death?’ said Maharaj Ji. ‘Your brother is gone and you are the only son left,’ He told the boy. ‘You must think of your family first and not lose yourself in your grief in this fashion. Now catch the train for Lahore and get back to your home as soon as you can.’ And so the boy caught the train and returned back to us.

“I repeat, this happened almost two years before Hazur gave up the body....He was already one with Hazur, and Hazur himself had told the Lahore Sangat that between him and Kirpal Singh there was no difference.”

- Ocean of Grace Divine. pp. 11-13

Manohar Singh tells us the following remarkable incident:

“When I was a small boy, about 12 years old, I went to Lahore. (We used to go to Lahore during summer vacations to visit with Kirpal Singh Ji, whom we called “Uncle.”) One day during noon, I was standing on the balcony of the house and it was raining very hard outside. I was looking outside through the window and I saw my uncle Kirpal Singh Ji coming along the road in that heavy rain. He entered the building and came up to the second floor where

he lived. As he came up I found to my great surprise that there was not even a drop of water on his clothes. I asked Uncle, 'How is it that it is raining so heavily and there is not even a drop of water of your clothes even though you were walking in that rain?' He smiled and said, 'Is it raining outside?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'I didn't know.'

“This episode took place about 1934 when the Beloved Kirpal Singh was forty years old.”

- from Ruhani Newsletter. Sept./Oct. 1975, p. 4